

First Principles of Christ

What are they?

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1. Repentance From Dead Works

(Works that lead to Eternal Death)

The very first thing on this list of first principles is repentance.

- The first recorded sermon of John the Baptist was *“Matthew 3:2 *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**
- The first recorded preaching of Jesus was *Matthew 4:17 *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**
- After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel”* (Mark 1:14, 15).
- When Jesus sent out the 12 apostles, 2 by 2 to preach in the cities, they went out and preached that {men} should repent (Mark 6:12).
- When the Pharisees and their scribes {began} grumbling at His disciples eating and drinking with the tax collectors and sinners, Jesus answered them, *“{It is} not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.”* *“I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance”* (Luke 5:30-32).
- After Jesus rose from the dead and gave his final instructions to the apostles, he told them, *“Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem”* (Luke 24:46-47).
- On the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Christ’s death on the cross, Peter preached what some people call the first gospel sermon and when the multitude was cut to the heart they cried out *“What are we going to do?”*, Peter replied, *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*
- In Athens, Paul preached, *“God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent”* (Acts 17:30).
- Paul told King Agrippa that he *“kept declaring”* to all those with whom he came into contact *“that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance”* (Acts 26:20).

One should not think it strange that repentance from acts that lead to death is first in the list of the first principles of Christ.

Repentance, what is it, what does it mean?

Repentance involves changing one's affections from earthly things to heavenly things. It involves turning to the living God from a god of self. It's looking unto Christ instead of looking unto another. Repentance is the right attitude toward God. It's a return to God. Repentance is the act of changing one's mind, will, and direction.

A certain man had two sons, Jesus told us, and he said to one, *"Go work today in my vineyard."* He answered, *"I will not."* But afterward, he repented and went (Matthew 21:28-29). Whatever this young man did Jesus said he repented. Jesus called his actions repentance. The young man reflected on the matter, arrived at the conclusion that he was wrong, and realized that he had sinned against his father. The young man did an about-face, made a decision, and then acted according to his decision to do his father's will instead of his own will.

Repentance is far more than a feeling of regret or remorse, although such emotions would certainly be present. It is also far more than the mere confession of specific past sins, although, again, such would most likely be involved as an *expression* of genuine repentance. From a biblical perspective, repentance is nothing less than a complete transformation of life; a reversing of direction *away from* sinful, selfish living *toward* sacrificial service to one's God and Father.

Here are some parallel words for repent:

BE CONVERTED *"Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3).*

MAKE JESUS YOUR LORD *"If you confess with your mouth Jesus {as} Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9).*

BECOME A DISCIPLE *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).*

DIE TO SIN *"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer" (Romans 6:1-2)?*

Repentance is required for salvation. If you do not repent of your sins you will be lost! *"Unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:3).*

Have you ever known someone who was baptized but then did not live for Jesus? Did not get involved in the church? Did not read and study the Bible? Did not follow Jesus? Did not seek first the kingdom of God? Maybe it was because they never repented. We cannot baptize someone who has not repented of their actions that lead to death. Being baptized without repenting would be like a man who tells his fiancé "I want to marry you but I will not promise to love honor, cherish or be faithful. Repentance has to come before baptism.

I asked a friend "Are you a Christian?" and got a strange answer "I was baptized. I'm not going to church, I quit reading the Bible. I pray every once in a while. I've never been arrested. Am I a Christian?" That made me wonder how is it that some people may think about being a

Christian. I'm concerned that some may have a real superficial idea about what it means to be a Christian.

I know that just because someone is a Christian, that doesn't mean they are perfect or immune to temptation. But surely we have to understand better than this. We expect too much if we expect dogs to fly and birds to bark, fish to purr and cats to live under water. Why? Because birds fly, dogs bark, fish swim and cats purr. That's what they do. That's what comes naturally. That's their nature. We expect too much if we expect unconverted persons to behave like Christians. But wait a minute. Aren't we all Christians? I was baptized, I come to church regularly. I sing the hymns and pray to God every day. I even read the Bible. My name is in the church directory. Don't tell me I'm not a Christian. Here's the problem with my friend's answer – it was a list of things he does or does not do. That was his answer – I do certain things and I don't do certain things.

What is a Christian, really?

It's one who has made Jesus his Lord!

We know Acts 2:38 but what about Acts 3:19? "***Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,***" We must be converted to be saved. We need to change the way we sometimes think about baptism. We need to emphasize it more. Never make it out to be a mechanical act, ceremony or ritual where we go through certain motions and having performed certain motions we think we are now Christians. We must be converted. **It is a death to life experience.** To be a Christian means to be converted, to be a disciple or follower of Jesus, someone who has decided to make Christ his life and reason for living, his Lord, someone who has died to sin in order to live for God. It is not just someone who for fear of dying and going to hell has taken out an insurance policy and tried to cover all bases so that he will be safe. It is someone who has given himself over to the Lord to obey him, love him, imitate him, and follow him.

Acts 2:38 When those 3000 men and women who were "*cut to their hearts*" by the teaching of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost asked what was expected of them in response to the message they had heard and believed, Peter answered. "*Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*"

We have to be careful to not think that if we can just get them baptized, then not only their *sins*, but also their *sinfulness*, will all be taken care of in some mystical manner at the moment they

arise from the "watery grave." After all, when we hear the phrase "obey the gospel," do we not normally understand that to mean "be baptized"? Some seemingly believe that the water will transform these sinners so that they might suddenly *begin* living for Christ thereafter. It's as if we assume changed hearts and lives are a *post*-immersion phenomenon.

If baptism is not preceded by a deep faith and genuine repentance, we do those whom we immerse a great disservice. Before we ever lead a seeking soul to the baptistery, we should first make absolutely certain we have truly led them to accept Jesus Christ as Lord. **True repentance** isn't just a change of thinking or feelings. It is a sincere change of the will that **results in a change of life**. It is the definitive decision to follow and obey Jesus in everything.

To repent is like signing a blank check made out to Jesus Christ the Lord. He will fill in whatever value whenever He wants to. Will you do whatever Jesus tells you to do? The attitude of the repentant is the same as that of the disciple:

- "Not my will but your will be done."
- "Speak Lord, your servant listens."
- "Here am I send me."
- "I am crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who lives but Jesus lives in me."

Questions

1. Repentance is
 - A. ___ Feeling sorry, regret and remorse
 - B. ___ A change of one's affections
 - C. ___ The act of changing one's mind, will and direction
2. True repentance is the definitive decision to obey and follow Jesus in everything- a total commitment.
T. ___ F. ___
3. Repentance is a required action of one's salvation
T. ___ F. ___
4. To be a Christian which of the following statements are true?
 - A. ___ Not my will but God's
 - B. ___ Speak Lord I am listening
 - C. ___ Here am I send me
 - D. ___ I am crucified with Christ and He lives in me
 - E. ___ All the above
 - F. ___ A, B and C

5. When Peter said “repent and be baptized for the remissions of sins” he clarified it by also stating “because you are already saved by your faith.”

T. ____ F. ____

2. FAITH TOWARD GOD

The great fundamental fact of Christianity is the death of Christ for our sins. That’s how Paul summed up the gospel:

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

This is the gospel, the good news. This has to be accepted as true, first of all, and then all other doctrines must be interpreted in the light of this fundamental fact if it is to be understood.

Christ died for our sins. That’s what the scriptures say. Where do the scriptures say this? Isaiah 53:5-6. *“He was pierced through **for our transgressions**, He was crushed **for our iniquities**; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.”*

Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins. He died in our place. The punishment that we deserve because of our sins, He received. That’s the gospel and the central truth of the Bible. It is called atonement (some translations use propitiation). Our salvation depends on it. When we start thinking about how to be saved, we might read and know from memory every passage in the Bible that speaks of the sinner’s duty in becoming a Christian or steps to salvation and still misunderstand Christianity. We could even preach a doctrine that makes void the grace of God.

At the very center of salvation is a sacrifice and it has to be so. Read Romans 6:23 which says *“the wages of sin is death.”* And think about salvation where no sacrifice of any kind has been made for the sins of man. We know that’s impossible, but suppose a person tries to be saved anyway. How would he try? If there is no sacrifice for him, he is forced to rely upon himself. He must please God in everything or else make atonement for his own sins. Whether it is humanly impossible to be perfect or not, the truth is that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We have all failed to make it on our own. The wages of sin is death. It just is impossible for man to pay for his own sins. Apart from a sacrifice for sins, man is hopelessly lost. If you try to be saved without a sacrifice for your sins, it has to be upon the principle of self-righteousness or

works. You have to deserve salvation. Salvation in this case would be given as a debt paid just as an employer owes the employee his salary when the work is done.

“Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due” (Romans 4:4). When man seeks salvation apart from a sacrifice for sins, he must seek it upon the principle of his own works and that is a hopeless cause.

Animal sacrifices for sin were commanded and offered under the Law of Moses. God commanded them and promised forgiveness but all that was not the reality. It was just a temporary shadow, an object lesson or an illustration to teach the people the principle that salvation from the sins of the guilty demands the sacrifice of someone innocent. The innocent animal was killed so that the guilty people could live. The writer of the Hebrews letter wrote: *“For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (10:4).* The writer meant, of course, that no animal sacrifice could take away sins.

Christ is the only effective sacrifice for sins. The blood of Christ is deserving. It **can** take away sin and **it alone can** take away sins. The blood of Christ is the only thing that God recognizes as able to atone, to pay for, to remove man’s sins. Nothing else is even considered as a purchase price of man’s redemption. ***“... knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, {the blood} of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19).***

Not gold, not silver, not the blood of animals, nor anything else conceivable that man might offer can wash away our sins - **nothing but the blood of Jesus.”**

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus; What
can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my pardon, this I see, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; For
my cleansing this my plea, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
Nothing can for sin atone, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; Naught
of good that I have done, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
This is all my hope and peace, Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
Oh! precious is the flow that makes me white as snow; No other
fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

We need to learn, memorize, understand, believe and constantly remember the words to this song, especially when we think about the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

If we were able to save ourselves, why would Jesus have to die? If I come before God with only my own goodness and good works, would that not make Christ’s sacrifice unneeded and useless? We are saved by faith in what Jesus did instead of what we have done.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

“When the kindness of God our Savior and {His} love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:4-6).

We only trust in the blood of Christ and that only. We must rely on nothing but the blood of Jesus. We can expect mercy from God only as we put the blood of the Lamb between ourselves and God. So what do we call this reliance upon the blood of Christ? Works? *“God forbid”* The Bible calls it faith. It has to be faith. Any other principle is incompatible with a deserving sacrifice such as the blood of Jesus. It is by grace through faith. Relying on, and trusting in the blood of Christ has to be classified as faith. A gift is not a gift if it must be paid for.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

What is saving faith and what does it include?

- Faith that saves is not merely intellectual; it’s not just mentally accepting that God exists or that Jesus died on the cross. James wrote that even the devils believe and tremble.
- Faith that saves is a faith that loves God. We must not only believe that God is, but we must love Him. Faith that avails is *“faith working through love”* (Galatians. 5:6). That is, intellectual assent apart from love is not genuine faith.
- Faith that saves is a faith that diligently seeks God *“And without faith it is impossible to please {Him,} for he who comes to God must believe that He is and {that} He is a rewarder of those who earnestly seek Him”* (Hebrews 11:6).
- Genuine faith may be expressed or not expressed, it is still faith. If God does not require an expression of faith He will bless man upon faith alone. But if an expression is required, no blessing follows until the required expressions are given. As proof see the following examples.

John 9: Jesus healed a man born blind. He spit on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam". So he went away and washed, and came {back} seeing."

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

Jesus required no act such as was required of the blind man in John 9. No washing, no expression of faith was required, just faith in Christ as possessing the power to heal.

In both cases, the blind received sight upon the principle of faith in Christ. In one case faith was expressed by an overt act, in the other case it was not. After all it is faith that the Lord wants. He has the right to require an expression of faith by overt acts but faith is still faith.

In Mark 2 we read about the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum. *“And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”*”

Again Jesus blessed on the condition of faith. He saw their faith and immediately performed the cure. But how could Jesus see their faith when faith is a mental act and as such cannot be seen? He saw their efforts to reach Him and these efforts manifested their faith. They were acts of faith. Not that they had been commanded, but the doing of them proved their faith.

Two things need to be learned from this cure. First, faith was the condition of the cure, and second, their efforts did not invalidate their faith. Their efforts to reach Jesus did not convert their faith into works so they claimed the glory for the cure. Faith expressed still remains faith.

But one more example: *“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days”* (Hebrews 11:30). Marching, as such, cannot harm walls of stone. But God commanded them to walk around the walls and this marching manifested the faith of the Israelites in God. So God, on the condition of their faith expressed by marching, felled the walls.

Again two lessons are learned.

First, faith expressed is still called faith. It is not converted into works. *“By **faith** the walls fell.”*

Second, expressions of faith do not invalidate faith. A refusal of Israel to march around Jericho would have proved their lack of faith, just as their marching manifested their faith.

We are now ready to ask - What does saving faith include? Is it unexpressed or expressed? If expressed, does it still remain faith? Or will it then become works?

Without repentance, the sinner cannot be saved but salvation is by faith. Repentance, then, must in some way relate to faith. Repentance might be defined as faith turning away from evil and deciding to follow Jesus. Faith and repentance are not to be separated. Of course, one can have cold, intellectual faith and refuse to repent. Faith is not just belief of facts, but the turning of the soul away from self and sin unto God and righteousness. Thus it includes repentance naturally.

But what about baptism? If baptism is a condition of salvation that is given on the condition of faith in Christ, it too must be related to faith, and so related that its meaning will not oppose the meaning of faith. Baptism is faith expressed by a deed. Faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for our sins is the faith that saves. What does baptism have to do with this faith? It pictures it, and embodies it. One believes that Jesus was buried. The immersion of baptism pictures this faith. One must also believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. The immersion pictures this faith. So baptism was selected by the Lord to be an expression of faith in order to picture it. And apart from faith, baptism has no meaning. This is where any idea of baptizing babies, breaks down.

The scriptures show that baptism is to be thought of as an expression of faith. Take, for example, Galatians 3:26, 27. *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”* We are sons by faith, a faith accompanied by and pictured by baptism. When we see one being baptized, we know, if he is sincere, he believes Jesus Christ died, was buried and was raised for his salvation. We cannot be thus certain of one’s faith in Christ just by seeing them doing benevolent work, for example. Benevolent work is a Christian act, but it does not picture a burial and a resurrection. **When we talk about salvation we can’t separate faith, repentance, and baptism.**

Acts 11:18 *“Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance {that leads} to life.”*

Acts 2:38 *“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”*

Acts 15:9 *“God made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, cleansing their hearts by faith.”*

- Is there such a thing as an unrepentant sinner with a cleansed heart?
- Is there such a thing as a saved sinner without his sins being forgiven?”
- Faith changes the heart, repentance changes the life, and baptism changes the state. Salvation is by faith in Christ and that faith is still faith though expressed by repentance and baptism.

How is a person saved?

Not by works

Not by faith and works

But by faith that works

By faith that repents

By faith that is baptized

By faith that obeys

There is a lot more that needs to be said and understood about faith in God but these things are part of the first principles of the teaching of Christ.

Questions

1. The Good News, Gospel, is - Christ died for our sins, He was buried and He was raised on the third day. T. ___ F. ____

2. The wages of sin is death, something we earn by things we did.
T. ___ F. ____

3. Christ atoning sacrifice, His death by crucifixion is a gift to be accepted by obedience.
T. ___ F. ____

4. A gift is something earned by deeds of obedience.
T. ___ F. ____

5. Faith that saves is
 - a. ___ Is a mental acceptance
 - b. ___ Requires no action on man's part
 - c. ___ Is obtained by obedience out of love

3. THE TEACHING OF BAPTISMS

What a beautiful and spiritually significant subject!

What a great thing God invented!

How we go to great lengths and suffer great inconveniences to baptize a person! Sometimes we go out in a dark sugar cane field at night, are awakened at 1:00 in the morning to go to the beach, and walk through the middle of sunbathers on a crowded beach at noon just to baptize a person.

What we believe about baptism can make it very inconvenient.

Does God place as much importance and urgency on baptism as we do?

Actually, the better question would be - Do we place as much importance and urgency on baptism as God does?

What's the rush? Acts 22:16

*"And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, **and wash away your sins**, calling on His name."*

This occurred the “same hour of the night”. 3000 were baptized the same day they believed and repented and the Holy Spirit thought that was important enough to have it recorded for us.

Why did God choose this expression of faith to be a requirement for salvation?

- a. To remind us of the depth of our conversion, that we died to sin.
- b. We need a fresh start, a new birth and baptism reminds us that we have been born again.

What blessings does a person receive when he is baptized as the Scriptures teach?

A person is saved when he is scripturally baptized. There are several aspects or ways of expressing this gift of salvation in the New Testament:

1. Salvation — Mark 16:15-16

*“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be **saved**; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”*

2. Forgiveness of sins — Acts 2:38

*“And Peter said to them, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the **forgiveness of your sins**; and you shall **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**.”*

3. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit — Acts 2:38 above

4. Sins washed away — Acts 22:16

*“And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and **wash away your sins**, calling on His name.”*

5. Cleansing — Ephesians 5:25-27

*“... Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might **sanctify her**, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.”*

6. Sanctification — Ephesians 5:26 above

7. A good conscience — 1 Peter 3:21

*“And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but **an appeal to God for a good conscience**—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*

8. Puts off the body of sin — Colossians 2:11, 12

*“In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in **the removal of the body of the flesh** by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism in*

which you were also **raised up with Him** through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

9. Raised with Christ — Colossians 2:12 above

10. Born again — John 3:3-5

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?’ Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’”

11. Baptized into the death of Christ - Romans 6:3-6

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** have been **baptized into his death**? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”

12. Become a child of God — Galatians 3:26, 27

“For you are **all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

13. Be clothed with Christ — Galatians 3:27 above

14. Enter into Christ — Galatians 3:27 and Romans 6:3 above

NOTE 1 - The phrase “**in Christ**” is very significant! When we enter **into Christ**, we then are found “**in Christ**” and “**in Christ**” all spiritual blessings are given to us.

Ephesians 1:3 — “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ**.”

Romans 3:24 — “being justified as a gift by His grace through the **redemption which is in Christ Jesus**.”

Romans 6:11— “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but **alive to God in Christ Jesus**.”

Romans 6:23 — “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is **eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord**.”

Romans 8:1 — *“There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”***

Romans 12:5 — *“So we, who are many, **are one body in Christ,** and individually members one of one another.”*

2 Corinthians 5:17 — *“...Therefore **if any man is in Christ,** he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”*

2 Corinthians 5:21 — *“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that **we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”***

Galatians 3:28 — *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus.”***

Ephesians 1:7 — *“**In Him** we have redemption through His blood, **the forgiveness of our trespasses,** according to the riches of His grace.”*

Ephesians 1:11 — *“**In whom** also we have obtained an inheritance”*

Ephesians 2:6 — *“...and raised us up with Him, and **seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”***

Ephesians 2:7 — *“...in order that in the ages to come He might show the **surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”***

Ephesians 2:13 — *“but **now in Christ Jesus** you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”*

Ephesians 3:6 — *“...that the **Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus** through the gospel.”*

Ephesians 3:12 — *“...**in whom** we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.”*

Philippians 3:9 — *“...and may be found **in Him,** not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.”*

Colossians 2:10 — *“...and **in Him** you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.”*

1 Thessalonians 4:16 — *“...For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and **the dead in Christ will rise first.**”*

2 Timothy 1:1 — *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to **the promise of life in Christ Jesus.”***

2 Timothy 1:9 — *“who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own **purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus** from all eternity.”*

2 Timothy 2:10 — *“For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the **salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.**”*

1 John 3:5 — *“And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and **in Him** there is no sin.”*

1 John 5:11 — *“And the witness is this, that God has given us **eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**”*

Romans 6:3-6 — *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** have been **baptized into his death**? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

*The phrase “**in Christ**” is very significant! When we enter **into Christ**, we then are found “**in Christ**” and “**in Christ**” all spiritual blessings are given to us (Ephesians 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**”)*

Galatians 3:26, 27 — *“For you are **all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**”*

But why baptisms (plural)? How many baptisms are there? **There is only one.**

Ephesians 4:4-6 — *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*

The question is asked: “If there is only one baptism, why does the writer of Hebrews refer to “baptisms?”

There are several baptisms mentioned in the Bible, but discounting those that were only symbolic and those that were temporary, there remains only one baptism practiced that remains today that puts one into Christ. It is immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of the sins of those who come to Jesus, repentant of their sins and trusting in His death (blood sacrifice) on the cross to take away their sins.

1. Baptism of John

Mark 1:4 — *“John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”*

Acts 18:25 — *“This man (Apollos) had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John.”*

Acts 19:4 — *“And Paul said, ‘John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.’”*

The baptism of John was temporary and no longer to be practiced after Christ gave his life on the cross.

2. Baptism in Fire

Matthew 3:7-12 — *“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*

The baptism in fire is symbolic of God’s judgment on the unrepentant.

3. Baptism into Moses

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 — *“For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”*

When Israel left Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, they were encompassed by water – the cloud over them and the Red Sea around them. This is a symbolic use of the word “baptism” in several details, not only them being surrounded by water (though passing on dry land). It is indeed a prophetic type of our experience. As they were freed from their slavery and came into the relationship with Moses as their leader, so we, in baptism, are freed from the bondage of sin and come into a relationship with Jesus as our Lord.

4. Baptism of Suffering

Matthew 20:20-23 — *“Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, bowing down, and making a request of Him. And he said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to him ‘Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left.’ But Jesus answered and said, ‘You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’ He said to them, ‘My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.”*

Matthew 26:39 — *Jesus prays “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” In John 18:11 “the cup which the Father has given me, shall I not drink it?”*

Mark 10:38-39 *But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” They said to Him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.*

Luke 12:50 *“But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!*

The “cup” and “baptism” Jesus spoke of in the above passages were a symbolic ways of talking about the terrible things he would soon suffer as he offered himself as our sin sacrifice. It is symbolic language.

5. Baptism with (in-ASV) the Holy Spirit

In Matthew 3:11, John refers to Jesus: *“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*

In Acts 1:5, Jesus said to them *“For John baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*

The baptism in the Holy Spirit was what Jesus did with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

John 15:26 — *“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me.”*

Acts 2:17 On the day of Pentecost, Jesus poured the Spirit out on “all flesh.” *“In the last days, God says ‘I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams.”* **The baptism in the Holy Spirit was a once for all time historical event.** The effects continue on but the Spirit has already been poured out on all humanity.

6. Baptism into Christ

Mark 16:16 — *“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”*

Galatians 3:27 — *“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”*

Romans 6:3 — *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?”*

Conclusion:

In Ephesians, Paul discusses many benefits of being “In Christ”, but particularly the benefit of redemption through His blood. Then in chapter four, he states "there is one Lord, one faith and one baptism." So of the six baptisms mentioned above, which one is he calling the “one baptism”? It is the one actual baptism practiced even today, often called Christian baptism, which is immersion in water in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. It is the one that puts believing, trusting and obedient believers into His one body, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. It is baptism **into** Christ.

As for the others:

The baptism of John was historical, and temporary and ended with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

The baptism of fire was a figurative expression used to describe God’s punishment.

The baptism of Moses was a symbolic passing of Israel through water and a prophetic type of experience of the church of God.

The baptism of suffering was a figurative expression used to describe the suffering and persecution of Jesus and his apostles.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit was a historical one-time-for-all out-pouring of the Spirit on all humanity on the Day of Pentecost.

There are plenty of false doctrines about baptism in the Religious world. For example:

1. “Baptism can mean sprinkle instead of immersion”.
2. “People who do not believe in Jesus may be baptized” (babies, for example.)
3. “You don’t have to be baptized in order to be saved.”

The following practices or language may reflect some common misunderstandings about baptism.

Some consider baptism as some arbitrary command God chose to test our obedience. Would God tell people to believe the gospel and then skip 3 rocks in a pond to be saved? No! Skipping rocks has nothing to do with the cross of Christ.

Some people schedule baptisms. But why not ask them instead "When do you like to schedule your salvation?"

Some people baptize those who have not repented, been converted, taken Jesus as Lord as if the physical act of immersion or baptism does the saving.

Some talk like they were baptized "in the _____ church". The one baptism is "into Christ," not into some church or organization. True, when we were baptized (biblically) God added us to the body of Christ which is His church but in baptism, we are "buried with Christ by baptism into His death" (see Romans 6).

Some teach the doctrine of exceptions to biblical baptism. They deduce (correctly, I think) that children, i.e. babies, are an exception to Mark 16:16 "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved" The question, though, is "Will God make an exception for people who don't know any better or who are physically unable to be baptized?" I have my opinion about this but the Scriptures are silent about exceptions and we might be wiser to teach what the Scriptures do say and leave the exceptions to our Just and Merciful God. He will surely do what is right with every soul.

Questions

1. Which of the following statements regarding baptism (immersion) based upon trust and obedience are true?
 - a. ___ Baptism Saves but not alone
 - b. ___ Baptism is for the forgiveness of sins
 - c. ___ Baptism washes away sin
 - d. ___ Baptism is an appeal to God for a cleansing
 - e. ___ Baptism puts the saved into the Christ church
 - f. ___ In baptism one is clothed with Christ
 - g. ___ One is buried into Christ's death in baptism
 - h. ___ One receives the Holy Spirit as a result of baptism
 - i. ___ All the above

2. John's baptism was
 - a. ___ For the forgiveness of sins

- b. ___ Of repentance for the forgiveness of sins
3. To be a Christian one must be baptized with fire. T. ____ F. ____
4. The baptism of Moses was for the forgiveness of the Children of Israel's sins.
T. ____ F. ____
5. Baptism of/ with/ in the Holy Spirit occurred
- ___ when Jesus was baptized by John
 - ___ on Pentecost when Jesus poured out His Spirit on all men
6. One is already a Christian before baptism therefore baptism is not to remove sin or to put on into Christ Body but to puts him into a church organization.
T. ____ F. ____

4. LAYING ON OF HANDS

In Scripture, we read that people laid on hands:

A. To Bless Children

Matthew 19:15 "And He laid [His] hands on them and departed from there."

Mark 10:16 "And He took them up in His arms, laid [His] hands on them, and blessed them."

B. To Heal

Mark 5:23 "and begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.'"

Mark 6:5 "Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed [them]."

Mark 16:18 "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Luke 4:40 When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them."

Luke 13:13 "And He laid [His] hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

Acts 28:8 "And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went into him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him."

The gift of healing was temporary. This does not mean that God does not answer prayers or that God does not heal. Just that certain people do not have this gift like Jesus, his apostles and certain other people did.

The apostles and others had this gift. There is a difference between praying for a sick person and asking God to heal them and receiving the miraculous power to touch someone and be instantly, miraculously healed of their disease, including blindness, paralysis, deafness or death. I know some people claim to have this gift but if I had that gift I would go to the Vanderbilt Children's Hospital and send every one of those little bald-headed cancer patients home healthy. The ones who claim to have the gift haven't done it. Why not? Because they can't! Why don't they try to do it? Because they know that can't do it. If I had the gift of healing, Mike Bratcher would not go home today in a wheelchair. He would go hop, skip and jump home!

C. To Bestow Or Impart Miraculous Gifts Of The Holy Spirit

Act 19:6 "And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."

Romans 1:11 "For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established."

Acts 8:5-19 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Obviously, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit that Phillip had and not the indwelling that was imparted. Simon saw the miracles and signs. Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given.

Acts 19:6 *“And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”*

D. To Ordain (designate or set apart) For A Ministry.

This has to do with the organization of the church.

Acts 6:3 *“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”*

Acts 6:6 *“whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”*

Act 13:2 *“separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then, having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”*

1 Timothy 4:14 *“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”*

1 Timothy 5:22 *“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins.”*

2 Timothy 1:6 *“Remember to stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the laying on of my hands.”*

SOME OBSERVATIONS:

1. Jesus, the head of the body, organizes His people, Christian men and women, the church, so that we may function properly. He organizes the body by giving a gift(s) (assigning ministries or functions) to each and every member.
2. A church organized by Christ through the Spirit according to spiritual gifts is much more than elders, deacons and preachers. Each and every member is to be a functioning part of a living organism.
3. The whole church, through Christ, causes itself to grow in faith and love by the involvement of every one of its members.
4. We don't all do the same thing in the work of the living Body of Christ leave as was but we all have something to do.
5. In the church we are part of one another. We are all to do our God-given part to build up the body of Christ. That means 100% of us. No one is exempted. No matter your age, gender,

maturity level, knowledge, education, talent - God wants us all to be actively involved in the work of the church - every single one of us.

6. Matthew 25:14-30 (the parable of the money). This parable speaks of the individual responsibility of each one, independent of the action of the others. Each one will be judged by his own deeds. However, in the church, the body of Christ, when one member does not do his part, it not only harms himself but the whole body. If the eyes do not see, the entire body is in darkness. If the feet do not walk, the whole body gives up walking. Even if you received only one ministry you still must do it. Each member, receiving one, two or five, must use what he has received for the good of the body.

7. We must not allow the existence of a system where one takes care of all. If the hands do not work but expect the eyes to work... if the feet do not walk but expect the eyes to walk... if the ears do not hear but expect the eyes to hear... if the mouth does not eat but expect eyes to eat... if the nose does not smell but expect the eyes to smell. This would be a monster!

8. At times, we seem to resemble the sacerdotal system of Catholicism or the pastoral system of Protestantism. Some few take care of all the work of the church. We have to allow Christ to work and reveal our individual functions. Being the body of Christ, there is no lack of work to do. Each Christian is a priest. If God places the weight of a brother on your shoulders and if you are capable, then you pray and step up to help.

9. In the church, sometimes, those who have five "talents" carry the weight of the multitude of members with one "talent". That's a big weight to carry. The direction of a church is not something that depends only on the work of some, but rather a question of us having the capacity to make each one with one "talent" exercise his gifts. The great problem in the church nowadays is that the one "talent" members hide their "talent". If all the one "talent" members exercised their "talent", there would not need to be so many multi-talented members. We have that motivate all members to do their part.

10. Ephesians 4:16 states that "all the body, adjusted and joined for the aid of all, grows and builds itself in love, in the measure where each part does through its function." This teaches 100% involvement of the members. No member can neglect his duty. We must always be encouraging each other to take initiative to do what they think Jesus is calling them to do and not to be restrained by the organization. The organization must facilitate and not hinder the service of any Christian.

11. Christians are right to call the brethren to serve Christ according to their gifts and to encourage each other to place all our resources at the disposal of the Lord. But it is not right to

create a guilt complex because somebody is not doing something that was not given them to do by the Lord.

12. You are one of the many members of the body. When you are working, serving, preaching, visiting, teaching, exhorting, counseling, etc. the body is working because the body only functions through its members. You, being a member of the body, are always a member of the body, all the time and not only when the body is in a meeting. The responsibilities of the church are the total of all the responsibilities of each member individually. For example: When husbands are taking care of their wives... When wives are taking care of the home... When parents are raising their children in the way of the Lord... When servants are stopping to help a person in need ... When elders are shepherding the flock... When leaders are organizing a retreat... When people of faith are praying for the lost and the sick... When evangelists are evangelizing... When members are visiting in the hospitals... When counselors are helping a marriage... When authors are writing books that edify..... the body is working! Each brother and each sister has a ministry. We need to help them know what it is and also to equip them for a good performance in their ministry.

Just think of all that could be done by this church **IF EVERYBODY DID SOMETHING!** This is exactly God's plan. "... *the whole body, joined and knit together by **WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES**, according to the effective working by which **EVERY PART DOES ITS SHARE**, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love* (Ephesians 4:16).

IF EVERYBODY DOES SOMETHING ... then nobody will be overworked and more will be done. That is God's plan.

Questions

1. The laying on of hands is available to all Christians today to allow them to heal cancer and all kinds of sickness.
T. ____ F. ____
2. Christians are individually responsible therefore independent of actions of others T. ____ F. ____
3. Some Christians are more capable than others in performing certain task T. ____ F. ____
4. The Church body, Christians, has
 - a. ____ Only one function and every member must perform
 - b. ____ Many different functions similar to the human body all of which must function together to be a healthy body.

c. ___ multiple functions some of which are more important than others, so Christians are to strive to do the important ones.

5. Every Christian has tasks or functions that God expects them to do. T. ____ F. ____

5. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

What is your favorite season of the year?

“Springtime is a beautiful time of the year. For many people think spring is the most anticipated, exciting, and blessed season of the year. The cold weather, low temperatures, bracing wind, and even occasional snow and ice all pass away. The deadness of the trees, the barrenness of the gardens, and the colorless grass pass away, to be replaced with refreshing showers, delightful temperatures, and bright sunshine of March, April, and May. The summer’s burning rays and burdensome heat have not yet arrived. Spring is a delightful time. Spring seems to bring a rebirth to all of nature. The blossoms arrive, the yellow daffodils and tulips show their colors, and the trees begin to display the light green shades of new leaves. Our gardens begin to show signs of new life as the vegetables rise from the soil. Spring means rebirth. Spring seems to bring a rebirth to all of nature.”

Springtime makes us think of spiritual things: The great coming day of resurrection.

Some things I know and some things I wonder about concerning the resurrection:

A. The WHO is easy? Everybody who has died

John 5:28-29

Acts 24:15

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

B. What?

The coming to life of what dies – our bodies

What will be raised will be what died – our bodies

Romans 8:23 *“we also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”*

C. When?

This is the easiest question of all. At the last day John 6:39-40, 44, 54

How many days will there be after the last day? Not a single one, at least referring to life on earth as we know it.

This is contradictory to “dispensational pre-millennialism” (which traces its roots back to the 1830s and John Nelson Darby).

D. How?

What will our resurrected bodies be like?

They will be our physical bodies, but gloriously changed and different! - **1 Corinthians 15:35-55**

Our physical bodies...

1 *Sown in corruption, will be raised in **incorruption!** – v42*

2 *Sown in dishonor, will be raised in **glory!** – v43a*

3 *Sown in weakness, will be raised in **power!** – v43b*

4 *Sown as natural bodies, will be raised as **spiritual bodies!** vs 44-49*

Even those who are alive at Christ's coming will undergo this "change", in which that which is corruptible and mortal will "put on" incorruption and immortality – **1 Corinthians 15:50-55.**

E. Why?

To survive biological death - in a disembodied state - is not our final state. Our final state is immortality (deathlessness) which occurs when Jesus returns.

Even if we **knew** that following death a Christian sat literally at Jesus' feet he would still be a disembodied being and as long as he is disembodied. Death is still a fact for him. It's only when Jesus returns and obliterates death completely that that person is fully redeemed. The Christian faith offers much more than “life after death” (lots of religions speak of that); it offers the **full** redemption of the human and that includes a restoration to body, soul and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). ***“May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

We mustn't think that life after death is the "final" state - it isn't! Humans are embodied beings, they undergo the death experience and at the resurrection they return to an embodied existence.

God never intended his children to ceaselessly exist as disembodied beings! *That would mean that death reigns!* The destruction of death *is* glorious resurrection. 1 Corinthians 6:13-14 “the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. *“God raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.”* God has no intention of jettisoning the body; the whole person is to be completely redeemed from the curse. Those who are embraced in Christ's redeeming work are destined for a glorious resurrection. **OUR PROPER RESPONSE to the doctrine of the resurrection:**

a. We **earnestly desire** to be clothed in our heavenly bodies.

2 Corinthians 5:1-5 *“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building [a body] from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, **earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven.**”*

b. Therefore, we should make it our goal to please God.

2 Corinthians 5:6-11 *“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the*

*Lord. **Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*

c. We **eagerly wait** with perseverance for the redemption of our bodies, even though we cannot see them now.

Romans 8:23-25 *“... even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **eagerly waiting** for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we **eagerly wait for it with perseverance.**”*

d. We will **purify ourselves**

1 John 3:2-3 *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

Do you have this hope?

Are you filled with the desire to purify yourself?

Questions

1. Who are those God will resurrect?

- a. ___ The righteous of all ages
- b. ___ Christians
- c. ___ All mankind from the beginning of time to the end of time

2. What will God resurrect?

- a. ___ The soul of man
- b. ___ Man's earthly bodies
- c. ___ All animals that have the breath of life

3. The Bible identifies the date when the resurrection and 2nd coming of Christ will occur. T. ____ F. ____

4. The earthly body whether alive or dead will be transformed, changed, into an immortal or indestructible body depending on whether they were made righteous by Christ blood or rebellious and evil.

T. ____ F. ____

5. When a man dies it is all over just like all other living creatures since there is no resurrection from the dead or life after death

T. ____ F. ____

6. ETERNAL JUDGMENT

What I usually don't like about the song "There's A Great Day Coming" is the last verse.

It needs to be sung mournfully. The words are true but are terribly sad.

When we preach the gospel we preach "Good News" and eternal judgment is not good news. It is bad news. But it is true.

I don't like telling people about eternal judgment.

Doctors don't like telling people they have terminal, inoperable cancer.

Good teachers don't like telling their students that they failed the test.

Employers don't like telling their employees that the factory is closing and they will be out of a job.

I didn't enjoy calling Kevin Harris' parents from Brazil to tell them their son died in a drowning accident.

Sometimes I wish there was no eternal judgment. The very thought of it is depressing and scary. Feelings I have had seeing a person condemned to life w/o parole. All the years knowing they will experience none of the joys of life – freedom, family, recreation. An example is the Muslim in prison in João Pessoa, Brazil - a vegetarian, going stir crazy, had to get out, no matter what, family in Paraguay, Bin Laden's doctor.

I wish there will be no judgment but Jesus said there will be, so that settles that. Whose idea was it anyway to invent a universal law that says you will reap what you sow? It was the Lord! Do I think I'm smarter than the Lord? Do you think He asked my advice when He decided on eternal judgment? Am I a better person than God because I can't stand to think about somebody being condemned to Hell and He promised that it will happen?

God takes no pleasure in punishing wicked people but He does it (Ezekiel 33:7-11).

There's a sad day coming and we'll sing it with sadness, just as God does.

CONCLUSION

a. Eternal judgment is actually good news, part of the gospel.

What I said (When we preach the gospel we preach "Good News" and eternal judgment is not good news. It is bad news but it is true) needs to be clarified.

Romans 2:14-16 "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."

What Paul is saying by the term "according to my gospel" is that this judicial outpouring of God's wrath is part of the gospel, and any preaching of the gospel that denies or omits this judgment aspect is deficient. It is a false, synthetic gospel that downsizes God. Such a gospel separates God's love from God's holiness and promotes the evil of lawlessness. That is not a popular message people want to hear nowadays.

The eternal judgment that is part of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ is good news because Jesus, in contrast to all human authorities, will "**judge the world in righteousness.**"

Act 17:30 - "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all {people} everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Christ's judgment will be righteous.

The eternal destiny of God's people is good news, order and not chaos, righteousness and not iniquity, truth, justice, goodness, peace and love. That's good news. The eternal triumph is of good over evil and truth over error.

b. We must preach the Word

2 Timothy 4:1-4 "I solemnly charge {you} in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be

ready in season {and} out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."

Matthew 12:41-42 *"The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. {The} Queen of {the} South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here."*

c. God's eternal judgment is eternal - Hebrews 9:27

d. We will find that which we seek - Romans 2:6-10

e. Will the great day of the judgment of God be a glad day or a sad day?

It depends on you. Jesus already did his part. How will we respond?

No man can escape the Judge or the judgment. Do not flee from him or try to hide from him, but hide in him. Seek glory, honor, and immortality. Seek peace with God through repentance and faith. There are only two ways, the broad and the narrow; and only two destinies, eternal life and eternal death. Now is the opportune time. We only have one shot at life (Hebrews 9:27).

What will God say to you on Judgment Day?

Questions

1. God desires that no man perish as he takes no pleasure in punishing the wicked but he will punish the wicked at the end of time on earth.
T. ___ F. ___
2. At the 2nd Coming of Christ and the judgment there will be:
 - a. ___ Good news – everlasting life
 - b. ___ Bad news – eternal death
 - c. ___ Both good news and bad news
3. God's judgment will be righteous as He is truth, merciful, holy, justice and love
T. ___ F. ___
4. The most critical action for those living pleasing to Christ is to see that His Good News of forgiveness of sins, Gospel, is proclaimed.
T. ___ F. ___
5. What will God say to you when you stand before Him on the Day of Judgment?
 - a. ___ Welcome and enter into the joys of everlasting life with Christ and all the righteous
 - b. ___ Depart from me and enter into the eternal death with Satan and all the rebellious wicked.