

Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

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Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

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At this point I need to express a very special thanks to all of the people who have contributed to my series of books, both directly and indirectly: First and foremost, His most wondrous of gifts--my wife Janet and the incredible blessings from the Lord as I continue to write this series of books. Next, all of the help and spiritual growth I received from attending and ministering in the Lord's non-instrumental churches: McPherson Church of Christ, Council Bluffs; Redline Church of Christ, Harlan, Iowa and Harlan Church of Christ. Also the instrumental churches: First Christian Church, Council Bluffs, Iowa; my home congregation--East Side Christian Church, Council Bluffs. And finally: my family, Kathleen Kachulas, and many other wonderful friends and brethren, and my nephew David West who offered his professional web design services. I truly appreciate all of their help and encouragement.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought no cease to yield fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

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Statement of Purpose

In mid-nineteen nineties I set out to research what took place when I first decided to obey the Gospel. The interest reaches back to 1978. This is when I first heard the gospel message from a preacher who served in a Council Bluffs, Iowa, Church of Christ – noninstrumental. My wife Janet had quietly and very effectively led me to attend this church and respond to the Lord's call. Throughout our dating and engagement she consistently modeled a Christian woman, greatly influencing my interest in the Lord. She never stopped.

The minister taught me the basics of salvation and I chose to answer the Lord's call. From this moment I became increasingly interested in learning what took place and began a systematic study of salvation. As I accumulated more knowledge and research information the thought occurred to me to share what I have learned. Thus my book began to take shape from a rough outline to a manuscript.

Through many years of writing I included other books and ending up with a series of books in various stages of completion. They speak about salvation, sin, the Lord's work of salvation, the covenant, and an overview book.

The books include the integration of many different types of theology: theology – information about God, Christology – the work of Jesus, pneumatology – what the Holy Spirit is doing, ecclesiatology – about the Lord's church, anthropology – mankind's response and accountability to God, soteriology – the process of salvation, and eschatology – concerning the end of time and eternal life in the body of Christ.

This book is the overview. I have organized the chapters to briefly look at many differing aspects of salvation. It has nine chapters which include basic steps of information leading to a greater insight about God, what takes place when responding to His free offer of salvation in Christ, and spiritual confidence.

The parts of each chapter are like stepping stones, one of many crossing a stream of spiritual water. As the reader progresses from one step to another he will begin to grow in a better understanding concerning his present fellowship with Jesus and knowledge of what lies ahead. Once he reaches the other side he is able to look back across the stream and see the wonders of God's grace. He is better equipped to recognize his participation and partnership in the Lord's eternal plan.

I sincerely hope this information becomes as useful to the reader as it is for me the writer. May God richly bless your efforts to understand the blessings of salvation which the Lord so lovingly gave to all humanity. I pray God will give you the confidence and faith to witness the wondrous grace of God to the lost and fellow servant's in the Lord.

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Section Five: God's Work

Spiritual Death

The first thing taking place in God's birthing womb of baptism is the spiritual separation of a servant's old self and spirit from his new life. Paul described this part of the new birth as the removal of the "old self" and "body of sin" (*Romans 6:6*). Earlier he wrote: "How shall we who died to sin still live in it" (*6:2b*). Spiritual death effectively separates the servant's old life in sin from his new life of righteousness. This is the function of death; it separates one spiritual or physical reality from another.

Spiritual death also releases the newly created servant from spiritual accountability to any law binding him to sin. Paul described what happens by comparing it to a married spouse who dies. The one who remains alive is no longer bound to the marriage covenant, "the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives" (*Romans 7:1b*). The marriage covenant ends upon death. Death separates the living survivor from the legal aspects of the Law and covenant of marriage. Even though Paul told this to those worshipping God under the Law of Moses, it also applies to the instinctual moral law given to everyone. This law is just as binding. He goes on to say, "we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we might serve in the newness of the Spirit" (*7:6*). The power of law makes a dramatic change as well. Its curse of death for a transgression is no longer effective for as long as the servant remains faithful to Jesus. Instead law functions as a guide working with the Spirit to enable the servant to grow in his ability to serve Christ righteously.

Spiritual death is used by God to prepare the now free servant for his recreation in Christ. He died in unity with Christ in order for the Spirit to prepare him for his first resurrection. In the next verse, Paul raised another question which demanded an affirmative answer from his readers, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death" (*6:3*).

The spiritual death taking place within the water of baptism unites the servant's spirit with the death of Christ. The servant is not united with His punishment but with the death resulting from the punishment. The Lord's death is not His punishment, even though the punishment caused His death. The Lord's death is not the cross even though the cross caused His death. The servant's spirit is united only with the death of Jesus. What take place is likened to a planted seed, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (*John 12:24*). When this spiritual death experience begins to take place a transaction is being realized. The innocent and sinless sacrificial death suffered by Jesus on the cross satisfies the death requirement of sin, "For he who has died is freed from sin" (*Romans 6:7*).

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Spiritual Death

How? Sin causes unholiness which compels God to separate the sinner from His holy presence. This is spiritual death. The spiritual condition will last into eternity if the servant does not appeal for forgiveness. His death with Jesus separates his recreated spirit from his old life, self, conscience, sin, body, and the curse of law. Everything connected with sin and its record of debt is separated by death. Spiritual death with Christ sets the stage for rebirth. The spiritual death experience with Jesus is the redemption payment. The Lord's physical death enabled the spiritual death to take place.

Death with Jesus takes place when His death and the spirit of the slave of sin spiritually unite in the water of baptism, "we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death" (*Romans 6:5a*). While united with Jesus, the innocent and sinless death of Jesus is recognized by God as a satisfactory substitutionary death for the spiritual death demanded by the curse of sin's accumulated debt. The death earned by sin must be received in full and the death experience with Christ satisfies this payment, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (*Romans 6:23*). Spiritual death is followed by a spiritual burial in unity with Christ.

Questions

The renewing work of the Spirit must begin with death, which is the death of the old spirit (not body) and separation of self and flesh from the new creation.

Romans 6:6, 6:2b

- 1) If you believe you have received salvation before baptism or without being baptized at all, how did you experience spiritual death?
- 2) Do you experience spiritual death during your immersion?
- 3) Are you able to feel your death?
- 4) How is death accomplished by faith if you are unable to physically feel the experience?
- 5) How do you visualize spiritual death?

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Questions

Spiritual Death

When the servant dies "united with Him" in spiritual death, his old spirit, self, flesh, conscience, and accountability to law is effectively separated from his soon to come new life.

Romans 6:5a, 6; Galatians 2:11; Hebrews 10:22; John 12:23-26

- 1) Since Jesus compared His death, burial, and resurrection to an emerging seed do you think He is referring to the servant being planted alongside of Him?
- 2) How is a servant of sin planted like a seed in unity with Jesus before he is baptized?
- 3) Do you think being "united with Him" begins when the seed (old spirit of the servant of sin) ends life in order to emerge into new life?
- 4) What part of your life is the seed, your spirit or your flesh?
- 5) What part of your life is the emerging new plant, your spirit or your flesh?
- 6) Does "united with Him" take place outside of the baptism experience?

Spiritual death releases the servant from the legally binding statutes of the moral law of "good and evil", and any other law which would cause accountability to God's justice.
Romans 7:1b, 6, 2:12-16; Isaiah 24:5-6

- 1) What does freedom from accountability to law mean to you?
- 2) Why do you think this is an important part of your separation from your old life?
- 3) What part do spiritual laws play in a Christian's life?
- 4) Do you still feel urges to transgress God's moral law?
- 5) Do you believe the law of "good and evil" is still embedded within your being?

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Questions

Spiritual Death

Spiritual death changes the purpose of law from accountability to counselor.

- 1) How do you feel about not being legally accountable to law?
- 2) How are you allowing law and commandments to guide you through life?
- 3) How do you observe new covenant commands?
- 4) Are you able to identify any specific commands?
- 5) Do you feel as if you are sinning if you do not live up to a command?
- 6) Do you think baptism is a work of law?

Spiritual death—the death of the spirit, takes place within the water of baptism.
Romans 6:3, 7-8; Romans 8:5-10

- 1) What do you think dies within the water of baptism?
- 2) What happens to the old flesh after baptism?
- 3) Do you feel changed in any way?

Jesus said a servant must lose his life in order to receive life. He compared the process with the death, burial, and emergence of a planted seed.

John 12:24

- 1) Is a seed able to emerge into a plant if it is not planted?
- 2) Does a seed die, shed its old shell, and emerge, before it is planted?
- 3) How would you describe the rebirth of a planted seed?
- 4) Is a planted seed different from what emerges from its death?

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Questions

Spiritual Death

- 5) Is the seed reborn into a new life?
- 6) Is the new plant separated from the life experienced by the seed and its parent plant?

A seed must first die and separate from the old before it is able to begin the growth process necessary to begin producing fruit.

- 1) What would happen to a seed if it didn't allow the new infant plant to emerge from its shell?

In order for a slave of sin to receive his new life he must first be "freed from sin".
Romans 6:7

- 1) Why is freedom from sin so important?
- 2) What is the bondage of sin?
- 3) What does Jesus mean when He speaks of freedom, is it spiritual or physical?
- 4) Are you able to feel the freedom?
- 5) How do you know what spiritual freedom feels like?
- 6) How do you reconcile the perceived ability to sense spiritual realities in contrast with faith in God's word concerning the same realities?

When Jesus is "united" with the servant in death His innocent death becomes a satisfactory substitutionary death or propitiation for the servant.
Romans 6:8, 3:21-28, 6:6

- 1) Why do you think death is so important?
- 2) Why do you think being spiritually "united" with His death is so important?

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Questions

Spiritual Death

- 3) Do you think you are able to feel this death?
- 4) What is the basic purpose of death both physically and spiritually?
- 5) How do you know for certain God has separated your old life by death from your new life?
- 6) Do you think being crucified with Jesus is the same as experiencing death with Him?
- 7) Does Scripture mention baptism as a confirmation of spiritual death which has already taken place?

The Scripture "for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" either refers to being spiritually baptized by the Spirit or being immersed into water and the Spirit performs the work of uniting the believer in unity with Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:13a; Acts 11:18

- 1) If the Holy Spirit spiritually baptized you, how do you know if you experienced Spirit baptism? If signs confirmed your baptism, how are signs compatible with faith in the unseen work of God?
- 2) If you felt the Spirit working in His baptism how do you know if it is the Spirit of God who gave you the feeling?
- 3) Is a person who receives baptism by the Spirit saved before the experience or after?
- 5) How does a servant of sin know when he receives the forgiveness of sins?
- 6) If all servants are "baptized into one body", in what spiritual position are those who believe they are saved before receiving baptism?
- 7) Does "baptized into one body" mean baptism is only used when someone needs to join a group of Christians in a church?

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Questions

Spiritual Death

- 8) If it is the Spirit who performs the work of uniting a servant of sin with Jesus, then what is the difference between the work of the Spirit within a baptism into water and the work of the Spirit performing a spiritual baptism without water?
- 9) What does Scripture reveal about the Spirit's work with a servant of sin the moment he is immersed in baptism?

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Spiritual Burial

As a result of the death, the dead spirit and self are buried in unity with the dead body of Christ. Paul revealed this in *Romans*: "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death" (6:4a). One's spiritual burial is not the same as His physical burial either. The Lord's friends buried Him but His burial involved a lot more than simply placing His body within an enclosed cave. Even though most of the spiritual details are left out of His burial, its significance is powerful enough to require every servant who dies with Him to experience spiritual burial with Him. The spiritual burial experience somehow evidences the reality of the death of the old spirit, self, conscience, separation from the binding effects of moral law, and the debt of sin resulting from transgressions against God's righteousness.

Redemption is effected in the form of a death and burial with Jesus by the power of the Spirit. His physical death has the spiritual power to purchase the servant's life by allowing him to spiritually die in unity with His death and burial. This begins the Lord's preparation for the next step of the redemption process, a resurrection from spiritual death to emerge a recreated-born again son of God.

Questions

After death the spirit is buried, and united with Jesus in a new life, just like a seed.
Romans 6:4a

- 1) Is there a prebaptism way, without being immersed into water, to become united with Jesus in His death and burial?
- 2) What do you think is buried with Jesus: your flesh or spirit?
- 3) Why do you think Jesus had to be buried?
- 4) Do you think the Lord's burial had anything to do with the burial taking place in baptism?
- 5) How does a burial relate to a planted seed?

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Spiritual Burial

- 6) Do you think the burial is explained by what happens to a seed in the ground?
- 7) Does Scripture mention baptism as a confirmation of a spiritual burial which has already taken place?

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Spiritual Circumcision

In between the servant's burial and resurrection a new spiritual state of being is created. A spiritual circumcision has taken place separating "the body of the flesh", by death, from the soon resurrected new spirit by the power of the Holy Spirit (*Colossians* 2:11). The newly created spirit will arise from the grave with Jesus, separated from his old body, his hard heart, accountability to instinctual law, and sin debt to God. *Ezekiel* foretold of this hundreds of years earlier: "I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh ... they shall be My people, and I shall be their God" (11:17-20).

In the new covenant: "circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit" (*Romans* 2:29). Spiritual circumcision is a cutting away of the hard heart of flesh in order for the Spirit to give the dead servant a newly created heart.

His being as a slave of sin is spiritually separated from his recreated spirit, self, and heart. Paul later revealed, "And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (8:10). God the Father considers a servant of sin who responds with belief, faith, and obedience in Him righteous as exemplified by Abraham, "even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to Him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham. So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham" (*Galatians* 3:6, 7, 9).

In the new covenant righteousness is given by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Righteousness is the holiness received upon the death of his old spirit, self, and conscience. Righteousness describes the spiritual state of the newly recreated spirit. He is holy, pure, and innocent – a new born child.

Spiritual circumcision also sets the cleansed spirit apart as a son of Abraham through the spiritual side of the promised seed. The spiritual side of the seed referred to the Messiah and His saints, the true spiritual heirs of Abraham. Even though the physical side of the seed included all people born into Israel, God only included those who remained faithful to Him alone in His family of saint's and heirs of the spiritual side of the promised seed. Only the recreated and reborn children of Christ become spiritual children of Abraham. They are sealed by their spiritual circumcision as citizens of His spiritual kingdom of promise. In *Galatians* Paul revealed: "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (3:29). The spiritual servant of Christ is now ready to receive his new spirit and life.

Fulfillment of belief, faith, confession, repentance, and obedience, depend upon the servant's spiritual circumcision, "when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh" (*Colossians* 2:13a). Death is always associated with uncircumcision and is the spiritual opposite of life and spiritual circumcision.

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Spiritual Circumcision

Paul tried to remind his brethren in Christ concerning the vital importance of spiritual circumcision performed by the Spirit. Every one of the believers became servants of God as a result of having fulfilled their faith. God considered these believers faithful as a result of being "baptized into Christ" only because they had faith in the invisible and unfelt spiritual promises being fulfilled in the water of baptism (*Galatians* 3:27a). A slave of sin is spiritually circumcised while submerged within the water because his spiritual death with Jesus results in the separation of new from old.

It is not the water performing the miraculous work taking place; it is the work of the Spirit. The slave of sin is counted as righteous by God as a result of His demonstrated belief and faith in the Lord's invisible work of redemption. The servant receives holiness and spiritual circumcision "through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (*Colossians* 2:12b). No one is able to receive a spiritual circumcision without being "buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him" (2:12a).

Spiritual circumcision also spiritually identifies a New Covenant believer in Christ, "For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ and put no confidence in the flesh" (*Philippians* 3:3). A servant cannot be with Christ in His body if he is not spiritually circumcised, nor is he able to "worship in the Spirit". Remember what Jesus said early in His ministry: "God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (*John* 4:24).

Questions

With the death of the old spirit a separation has begun to take place. The old flesh and self are now completely separated from the new living life about to emerge.

Colossians 2:11; (*Deuteronomy* 30:1-6; *Ezekiel* 11:17-20); *Romans* 6:6a;
Deuteronomy 10:16; *Jeremiah* 4:4, 9:25-26; *Romans* 2:28-29; *Philippians* 3:2-3;

- 1) What begins to take place when a new plant emerges?
- 2) Did non-physical circumcision exist before Christ began His church?
- 3) How did spiritual circumcision in pre-Christian history connect with Abraham's spiritual heirs?
- 4) What did non-physical circumcision accomplish before His death?

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Questions

Spiritual Circumcision

- 5) Does pre-Christian circumcision illustrate the importance of separation from sin, amoral, idolatrous lifestyle, and attitudes towards God's standard of righteousness?
- 6) How does pre-Christian spiritual circumcision clarify the purpose of Christian spiritual circumcision?
- 7) In the new covenant how is a servant spiritually circumcised?
- 8) During what part of a servant's gospel response does Scripture mention spiritual circumcision taking place?
- 9) Do you think spiritual circumcision is necessary?
- 10) Are you able to feel it taking place?

The death of the servant's spirit effectively separates his old heart and self from his new. This is a spiritual circumcision.

Romans 2:29, 8:10

- 1) Do you feel separated from your old life?
- 2) If Jesus said your old self and heart are circumcised from the new do you still feel affected by the old self and heart?
- 3) Do you try to live a circumcised lifestyle?

Spiritual death, burial, and circumcision are steps involved in being given righteousness (made holy). The series of spiritual miracles taking place are completely dependent upon belief and faith in the integrity of God's word.

Galatians 3:6, 7, 9

- 1) Why do you believe belief and faith are so important?
- 2) If you can feel what God is doing why is faith necessary?

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Questions

Spiritual Circumcision

- 3) Do you think what is taking place within the water of baptism is a series of spiritual miracles?
- 4) When does spiritual circumcision take place?
- 5) Does Scripture mention baptism as a confirmation of spiritual circumcision which has already taken place?

When a servant is spiritually circumcised he is no longer considered as spiritually dead.
Colossians 2:13

- 1) What is "uncircumcision of the flesh"?
- 2) Is spiritual circumcision necessary for salvation to take place?
- 3) How does spiritual circumcision lead to life?

The spiritual death, burial, and circumcision within the water of baptism cannot be a necessary ritual of some sort for the already forgiven. It is a real spiritual event taking place which is entirely dependent upon the belief and faith of the one being baptized.
Colossians 2:12b

- 1) Do you think a servant is able to enter into the water of baptism already spiritually circumcised for the purpose of receiving his spiritual circumcision?
- 2) If your heart feels salvation how do you know if it is telling you the truth?
- 3) How do you know what salvation feels like?
- 4) How do you know what feeling saved feels like?
- 5) What is God's Scriptural standard for feeling salvation?
- 6) How do your feelings reconcile with baptism?

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Questions

Spiritual Circumcision

7) What does spiritual circumcision feel like?

Spiritual circumcision cannot take place in any other environment than within the water of baptism. The servant must be first "buried with Him".

Colossians 2:12a

- 1) Do you believe Paul correctly describes what is taking place in the water of baptism?
- 2) Where did Paul learn about baptism?
- 3) Where did Peter learn about baptism?
- 4) When do you think Scripture states forgiveness takes place?

A Christian is spiritually identified by his spiritual circumcision.

Philippians 3:3

- 1) What is the difference between true and untrue circumcised people?
- 2) What do you think meant when he mentioned the "true circumcision"?

Only the spiritually circumcised are able to worship God in "spirit and truth".

John 4:24; Philippians 3:3

- 1) Are you able to worship Jesus according to His Father's will if you are not spiritually circumcised?
- 2) How do you spiritually worship God?
- 3) How are you guided in worship: by the Spirit, your heart, feelings, or a combination of all three?

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Spiritual Resurrection

The final step of the redemption process taking place within the water of baptism occurs when the Holy Spirit recreates a new spirit and self in Christ. In *Ephesians* Paul wrote: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (2:10a). The body of death is now fully separated from the newly resurrected spirit and the new spiritual life form emerges from the water as a babe in Christ no longer enslaved to sin or spiritually accountable to any law. The curse has been satisfied and the debt is released due to spiritual death. Just as the resurrected body of Jesus differed from His dead and buried body so is the resurrected spirit from what died with Christ.

A few verses earlier Paul wrote, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgression, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) (2:4-5). The whole process of redemption takes place by the power of God. He fulfills His promises. Within baptism the servant is simply a passive participant in the rebirthing process other than his belief, faith, and obedience in the process taking place.

His response is his commitment to repentance and proves the sincerity of his confession of Jesus as Lord, Savior, and Master. His submission to the spiritual death, burial, and resurrection is fulfilled within the water of baptism by the unseen work of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote: "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (*Romans* 6:5). This is the reason why the newly recreated son of God is "alive together with Him" (*Colossians* 2:13b). He became one with Jesus, belongs to Jesus, and his life is dependent upon Jesus. He is one with Jesus in death and in life. He will grow with Jesus as a seed emerges from the transition of death and begins its new life in rich well cared for soil.

In *Romans* Paul noted: "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall live with Him" (6:8). He reminded his brethren of the spiritual miracle which took place when Christ recreated them into life and the assurance of faith in the grace of God by performing what He promised.

The spiritual experience of rebirth is only realized in baptism, "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" (*Colossians* 2:12b). This is why the servant's spiritual resurrection in the water of baptism is effected by the grace of God. But, his spiritual resurrection must also be realized by the belief and faith motivated obedience of the servant being given new life by the power of God. The grace of God assures His promised work in the water of baptism. Faith assures the servant he has experienced what God has promised even though it is unseen. Remember, without faith in His work, "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 seek Him" (*Hebrews* 11:6b).

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Spiritual Resurrection

The resurrection experienced in baptism is the new bond-servant's first resurrection. John revealed in *Revelation*, "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years" (20:6). In these few words the Lord assured His children they have a very real reason for their joy about their new position in Christ:

- 1) God considers these "blessed," happy people as "holy," they are righteous, purified of all sin, and sanctified in Christ.
- 2) The first resurrection experienced with Christ in baptism assures the servant, if he remains faithful, he will remain holy to God.
- 3) Holiness in Christ assures the servant promised life, replacing the promised death reserved for every person who has not experienced his first resurrection with Christ in baptism.
- 4) Every holy saint in Christ is also a priest serving God the Father under their high priest Jesus Christ.
- 5) All of the children resurrected with Christ forever rule with Him in ways humanly impossible to imagine.
- 6) The blessings revealed by Jesus to John are realized the moment the newly recreated child emerges into life with Christ in unity with His resurrection. The very first blessing of his new life is the gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

The second and final resurrection is experienced the moment Christ returns, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (*1 Corinthians* 15:52). This is the moment when the recreated son of God receives his new body, either after his physical death or as he witnesses Jesus returning to His earth.

When a servant emerges from God's watery womb of baptism he is a brand new creation in Christ, newly reborn. Even though the body remains dead in its corruption of sin and lust and remains the same physically, the spirit, self, conscience, and heart is recreated, new, spiritually circumcised, and holy; He is now God's new child in Christ. He is a spiritual baby, newly formed, ready to begin spiritual growth, forming his new life, and restoring his soul into a maturing and useful servant of God in Christ.

Even though the new spirit must still live in the old sin corrupted physical body, it is spiritually separated from the body. The body becomes a useful instrument used by the new spirit to accomplish the will of God within the world. This is basically the reason why a believer experiences so much trouble with temptation.

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Spiritual Resurrection

His flesh, old self, and physical memories remain the same in their death and corruption, "And if Christ is on you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10).

Even though the old flesh is dying it still desires the same fulfillments of sin. It is the responsibility of the recreated spirit with his new heart to follow the counsel of the Holy Spirit in order to compel the flesh to conform to the New Covenant and new life in Christ as he learns to conform to God's standard of righteousness.

The newly created spirit is now part of the flow of the promise and will receive its rewards during life and after the death of his body--forever.

Questions

The final step of the servant's recreation is his resurrection.

Ephesians 2:10

- 1) Do you feel recreated?
- 2) By what standard do you feel recreated?
- 3) If you cannot feel recreated how do you know you are recreated?

The spiritual miracle which takes place within the water of baptism is by the grace of God. A man cannot spiritually recreate himself or anyone else, it is an impossible task.
Ephesians 2:4-5

- 1) What is recreated in the water by the power of the Holy Spirit?
- 2) How is a servant recreated before baptism?

The spiritual resurrection is the spiritual emergence of a new creation "united with Him ... in the likeness of His resurrection".
Romans 6:5

- 1) Do you feel resurrected?
- 2) How does Scripture describe the feelings of recreation?

Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

Section Five: God's Work

Questions

Spiritual Resurrection

3) How do you know the Spirit resurrected you from death?

4) What is spiritual resurrection?

All of His resurrected are given life with Jesus.
Colossians 2:12b

1) Do you think the resurrection points out the importance of spiritual death, and burial?

2) How does the resurrection lead to life?

When a recreated servant is raised with Christ his sins are forgiven, his new spirit is innocent.
Colossians 2:13b; Romans 6:4, 13

1) Do you feel new?

2) How do you know you are new?

3) If you feel new by what spiritual standard are you comparing what you feel in order to confirm what you feel?

4) Do you believe you experienced newness before your baptism, how do you know for sure?

5) Is there more than one way to experience the path to newness?

The resurrection experienced within baptism is the servant's first resurrection.
Revelation 20:6

1) What happens to those who do not experience their first resurrection?

2) When does the first resurrection take place?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

Spiritual Resurrection

- 3) How do you know it took place in your life?
- 4) Are your feelings of freedom able to confirm the spiritual reality of your first resurrection?

The spirit is resurrected into life with Christ, but he must still live within the old body.
Romans 8:10

- 1) Does your old flesh still bother you?
- 2) How do you fight off the desires of your old self?
- 3) What do you do when old memories and sin guilt come into mind?
- 4) Do you allow the Spirit to counsel you through spiritual growth pains?
- 5) Do you allow compromise for the sake of retaining worldly links?

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Section Five: God's Work

The Gift of Righteousness

God gives righteousness to New Covenant sons of God for the same reason He gave it before Jesus died. He witnesses the servant's fulfilled belief, faith, and obedience; and considers it as righteousness. However, there are at least two major differences concerning the gift prior to and after the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection:

1) Preceding the Lord's death--belief, faith, and obedience focused exclusively upon God the Holy One. Worship focused upon a faith motivated but physical response to the Lord's will. God considered the servant's faith as righteous based upon his motives, self-circumcision of heart, and how he chose to apply his belief, faith, and obedience, and self-circumcision of heart, according to His will.

God mentioned Abraham as an example of how to serve. Paul noted this in *Romans*: "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness ... faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness" (4:3b, 9b). God considered Abraham's spiritual and physical response to His will as righteous and holy.

God also made spiritual circumcision an indispensable part of righteousness before the death of Jesus. His servant spiritually circumcised himself as a result of His moral obedience to God's will. This circumcision is not physical and involves females, it's brought about by faith motivated obedience to the moral aspects of the Law and the instinctual law of "good and evil". Jeremiah quoted the Lord admonishing Israel to repent and restore their spiritual circumcision: "Break up your fallow ground, and do not sow among the thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and remove the foreskins of your heart ... lest My wrath go forth like a fire" (4:3b, 4a).

2) Following the Lord's resurrection, worship changed from an indirect faith response through priests to direct spiritual fellowship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. In Christ worship changed to spiritual and oneness with God the Father. Early in His ministry Jesus foretold of this great change of worship styles, "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers" (*John 4:23*).

Yet despite this radical change God still considered one's faith as holy and righteous because of his obedience. However, the application of the servant's response to God changed. He only considers the faith of those who choose to express their belief, faith, and obedience through Jesus Christ as righteousness. Remember what Jesus stated very clearly: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father; but through Me" (*John 14:6b*).

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Section Five: God's Work

The Gift of Righteousness

The righteousness or holiness which God the Father recognizes through Jesus is given to any servant who chooses to express his belief, faith, and obedience to Him through Jesus. Faith motivated obedience must include the servant's confession, commitment to repentance and submission to baptism. The servant must become one with Jesus by experiencing a spiritual death, burial, circumcision, and resurrection before God will consider him as holy and pure. God looks at the purity of the new creature in Christ and considers him as righteous because he is holy in Christ.

In his letter to the *Romans* Paul wrote: "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (4:5). The entire process of salvation in Christ Jesus is based upon the combined effort of the servant's faith motivated response to His will and the unseen work of God's grace of redemption. This is a major reason why ritual baptism cannot spiritually purify the servant who already believes he is saved.

Paul made a clear distinction between righteousness given by grace and receiving righteousness as a result of earning it from perceived righteous works as directed by the Law of Moses, tradition, morals, practicing piety, or ritual offerings of any type. He wrote: "Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham. 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. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (*Galatians* 3:6-7, 26-27, 29).

Abraham did not strive to earn his righteousness. He couldn't. He had to receive it as a gift of God's grace. But he had to believe God's word and in order to fulfill his belief he needed to do God's will by realizing the obedience of faith.

Paul described how righteousness is given in the New Covenant, noting it's still God's recognition of obedient belief and faith in the expressed will of God. God considers the servant righteous because of his belief, faith, and submission to the expressed will of God the Father, exclusively through Jesus Christ according to His covenant. The servant of sin must be redeemed by Christ "united with Him in the likeness of His death" before he will be considered a faithful believer (*Romans* 6:5a). A servant of sin cannot be righteous until Christ recreates him into holiness. The only way sin debt is satisfied is by payment of death. Before God the Father will consider a servant righteous he must submit to spiritually becoming one with the death of Jesus Christ. The Lord's death satisfies the requirement of holiness and provides the means of recreation.

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Section Five: God's Work

The Gift of Righteousness

A servant of sin is made holy by Christ according to an eternal standard of righteousness—God's nature. God rewards the believer's faith as he experiences his spiritual rebirth in with Christ. He is "reckoned as righteousness" by God as a result of having proven his faith through obedience to the will of Jesus Christ (*Romans* 4:5). Without a working belief and faith in the unseen spiritual work of God taking place before, during, and after baptism, righteousness cannot be received or maintained.

This is an important reason why baptism must be entered into with faith. The servant enters into the process of redemption in order to experience his new birth. Even though someone may say he feels righteous, if he does not respond according to new covenant stipulations in Christ he will not be righteous according to the revealed word of God. No servant is able to physically sense or understand righteousness—it's a spiritual reality. If he feels saved in his heart he is deceiving himself. Only God's word is able to tell him he is saved. There is no other source for this type of spiritual information and assurance.

Without belief and faith repentance is empty, confession is a misconception, and baptism becomes a gutted and meaningless ritual—a perception of deception, "you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death or of obedience resulting in righteousness" (6:16).

James noted in his letter, "was not Abraham our father justified by works ... faith was working with his works, as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness'" (2:21a, 22a, 23b). Thus, belief and faith are only recognized by God as sincere when He has "reckoned faith as righteousness."

In *Romans* Paul stated: "those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (5:17b). In this scripture Paul revealed at least four more insights about righteousness:

- 1) The work of faith, considered by God as obedience to the new covenant will of Jesus Christ, is how a slave of sin receives "the abundance of grace." The grace of redemption is a gift which God gives exclusively to those who receive righteousness. The gift of righteousness is a gift of God's grace. Righteousness is holiness and the only way a servant is able to receive holiness is by being recreated in Christ.

- 2) Only those who receive the "gift of righteousness" receive eternal life. Eternal life is given solely through Jesus Christ.

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Section Five: God's Work

The Gift of Righteousness

3) The work of faith is a work of belief, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (*John 6:29b*). Works of belief are the same as works of faith-- confession, repentance, obedience, and baptism. When combined as a common response to God's grace of redemption belief and faith they result in receiving righteousness before God. Faith is a gift of God's grace because it must originate from His word, which is a gift. The whole process of salvation is freely given by Jesus by His grace: His life, the Word, faith, righteousness, and life. The servant's response must be unified with God's grace of redemption in order to result in righteousness.

4) Every servant who is raised with Christ experiences his "first resurrection". As a result of his new position in Christ he is free from the power of the "second death" and is anointed by God as one of His priests, "priests of God". Another promise received is the spiritual position of reigning "with Him for a thousand years" which is forever. Paul spoke of this when he said "reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (*Revelation 20:6*). All of the Lord's righteous saints are sons of the eternal King, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ" (*Romans 8:16-17a*).

When a slave of sin is saved by the grace of God, he is receiving righteousness reckoned to him by God as a result of his belief and faith in the miracle of redemption in Christ. Redemption is freely given when any servant of sin receives a new life which is his rebirth, by the power of the Holy Spirit through Christ Jesus. Paul noted this in his letter to the *Ephesians*: "even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ... For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (2:5, 8, 10a).

After God the Father raised Jesus from the dead and the New Covenant replaced the first covenant, belief, faith, confession, repentance, and obedience still focused on God, but the focus of worship changed to Jesus Christ in order to serve God the Father, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (*John 14:6*).

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

The Gift of Righteousness

The blessing of righteousness is always given for the same response to God's will, belief and faith as patterned by Abraham.

Romans 4:3b, 9

- 1) Are you righteous?
- 2) What is being righteous?
- 3) Do you feel righteous?
- 4) What are some similarities between how God gives righteousness in the new covenant in contrast to pre-Christian ages?
- 5) Why do you think belief and faith are so important?
- 6) How do grace, belief, and faith link with obedience to the Lord's will?

Spiritual circumcision is also a vital part of the blessing of righteousness. It is also patterned after pre-Christian circumcision of the heart.

Jeremiah 4:3b, 4a

- 1) Do you believe spiritual circumcision is linked to righteousness?

Even though Jesus changed how worship is offered to God the necessity for righteousness has not changed.

John 4:23

- 1) Why is righteousness so important to God?
- 2) What is the spiritual state of righteousness?
- 3) Are you holy and sinless?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

The Gift of Righteousness

Righteousness is only given through Jesus.

John 14:6b

- 1) Why can't you receive righteousness the same way as Abraham did?
- 2) How did the new covenant change the way righteousness is given?
- 3) If you must express works of faith, belief, obedience, confession, repentance, baptism, and live a life of faith in Christ, how is it given by grace?
- 4) Abraham received righteousness because of his belief and faith motivated obedient works. How did God's grace connect with his works?

Everything which takes place to receive righteousness is based upon faith in the Lord's word.

Romans 4:5

- 1) Why is faith so important to receiving righteousness?
- 2) If faith and belief are always expressed through works in response to God's will, how is righteousness given by His grace?
- 3) How did you express your faith and belief in order to receive righteousness?

The righteous have demonstrated both belief and faith in Jesus, received a new life in baptism, are "clothed with Christ ... belong to Christ", are God's children and "Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise".

Galatians 3:6-7, 26-27, 29; Romans 6:5a, 8:16-17a

- 1) How do you become a righteous heir of God?
- 2) When is a servant an heir?
- 3) Is it important for you to express belief and faith in what takes place within the water of baptism in order to receive righteousness?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

The Gift of Righteousness

4) How do "clothed", "belong", "children", "Abraham's offspring", and "heirs", link with righteousness?

Righteousness cannot be received by obeying law, tradition, or any type of religious ritual. It is only given when the servant chooses to demonstrate his belief and faith in response to the Lord's gospel.

Romans 4:5

1) If Abraham simply said, "I believe in you God" would God have considered him as righteous?

2) How is righteousness given in the new covenant?

3) What is motivating you to express your confession of Jesus as Lord and Master?

4) How does confession and righteousness link together?

Righteousness is a spiritual state of being; it cannot be sensed or felt in the servant's heart. If he could feel it holiness would not be based upon faith.

1) Are you able to feel your righteousness?

2) How do you know for certain you are righteous?

The works of belief and faith prove the servant's confession, obedience, and repentance, and life in Christ. As with Abraham, God reckons the servant as righteous because of his complete response even if it is imperfect.

James 2:21a, 22a, 23b; Acts 26:19; Romans 12:2; Philippians 2:14-16

1) Abraham had his difficulties with sin just like everyone else. What stood out in his life and response to God's will?

2) Why do you think it is important to study the cycles of sin and repentance experienced by the righteous saints who lived in the pre-Christian ages?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

The Gift of Righteousness

- 3) Do you need to prove your faith and belief through works?
- 4) What are works?
- 5) Which is more important: the works or what is motivating the works?
- 6) Is it possible to confess obedience to the Lord Jesus – Master without works?
- 7) Is repentance possible without works?
- 8) How are the works of repentance linked with righteousness?
- 9) How do you express works of obedience to your Master?

Righteousness is a gift of grace even though the servant must prove his heart through physical obedience.

Romans 5:17b; John 6:29b; Ephesians 2:5, 8,10a

- 1) If God already knows your heart why do you think He considers the works of belief and faith so important?
- 2) If the gift of righteousness from God demands a response of obedient belief, faith, and works, how does grace fit in the response to His will?
- 3) How does God's grace and works work together in unity?
- 4) Why is your motivation so important?

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Section Five: God's Work

The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

Sometime, either while still submerged in the water, or as the newly created servant arises out of the water, the new son of God is given the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to live within his body. In his first gospel sermon, the Spirit inspired Peter to preach, "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" (*Acts 2:38*). While leaving out many of the details concerning what took place within the water of baptism Peter highlighted at last five important points:

1) God the Father requires a slave of sin to obediently submit to submersion into baptism before He will honor his commitment to repent. Different Greek words are not used in this verse describe sprinkling or pouring water on someone.

2) The miracle of redemption taking place within the water of baptism must be accomplished under the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. This is a confession of His deity and power to give new life.

3) The servant's debt of sin is separated from his new spirit when he dies in unity with Jesus, resulting in complete forgiveness and justification.

4) The "gift of the Holy Spirit" is received only after the slave of sin spiritually dies with Jesus, is buried, and resurrected by the power of God. His newly created spirit is pure and righteous as a newborn. The moment God considers the servant spiritually circumcised and righteous He is able to give the servant the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

5) Jesus determines whether or not a servant of sin chooses to believe Peter's Spirit led sermon according to how he responded by faith and belief motivated obedience to Spirit inspired instructions. Luke later commented about those who responded to Peter's sermon by noting the blessing received upon having submitted to the Spirit's instructions:

a) "Be saved from this perverse generation!" (*Acts 2:40b*), salvation separated the saved from the rest of the people still trapped in bondage to sin.

b) "Those who had received his word were baptized" (*Acts 2:41a*), all saved had submitted to baptism. The response proved their reception of God's will.

c) "There were added that day about three thousand souls" (*Acts 2:41b*), to the body of Christ—His church.

d) "All those who had believed were together" (*Acts 2:44a*), Jesus only recognized the people who responded to the Spirit as having believed His word. Anyone can believe in Jesus, but only those who receive His word according to His new covenant will become believers.

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The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

e) "The Lord was adding to their number day by day" (*Acts 2:47b*), the Spirit repeated the same redemptive scenario resulting in more additions to the Lord's body of believer's.

f) "Those who were being saved" (*Acts 2:47b*), the Spirit only considered those who submitted to Peter's sermon and received His presence as saved from sin and righteous.

Later, Paul wrote to the *Ephesians*: "in Him, you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (1:13). He noted at least three other vitally important facts about the process of salvation revealed by the Spirit:

1) Only those who responded to what Christ promised to accomplish within the water of baptism with belief and faith motivated obedience are included with those who listened "to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation".

2) Only those baptized "for the forgiveness of your sins" are considered as "having also believed".

3) Those baptized in Christ became believers because they submitted to their baptism under the authority of His name in order to "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The internal presence of the Spirit is God the Father's assurance of a completed process of salvation resulting in righteousness. Only a new recreated spirit and self with a new conscience and Spirit circumcised heart is innocent of all sin. Everything which God promises and performs in the servant's initial experience with salvation is unseen and cannot be physically perceived by any means, this is why belief and faith are so important for assurance.

Paul noted the importance of the gift of the Spirit: "sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance" (*Ephesians 1:14a*). He also mentioned in his letter to the *Galatians* how a servant must be "clothed with Christ" before he is considered as one of "Abraham's offspring ... heirs according to promise". This promise can only take place after the servant is "baptized into Christ" (3:27, 29). Thus, the promised inheritance is assured to only those who have received the gift of the indwelling presence of the Spirit.

In his *second* letter to the *Corinthians* Paul told his fellow-Christians, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge" (1:21-22). This revelation along with (*Ephesians 1:13b, 14a*), "you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance", reveals two major reasons why God gives the Holy Spirit to His newly born children:

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The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

- 1) He is a seal assuring the adoption of all His righteous children in Christ Jesus.
- 2) His presence is a part of the promised inheritance.

The Holy Spirit is an anointing from God the Father in recognition of the servant's response to the will of Christ and his recreation in Christ. The servant is now holy and righteous.

He now belongs to God the Father in Jesus Christ and He wants His servant to develop full assurance of this new spiritual reality and identity. His presence also assures the servant of other blessings, the most obvious being: he is one with God Himself because he is now a temple of God. His presence reveals to the servant his new spiritual position in the Lord's kingdom – His church.

In his letter to the *Galatians* Paul revealed: "in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" in His unseen work (3:14b). Later in the same chapter he said, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (3:26). The indwelling presence of the Spirit is given only to the faithful, those who have chosen to respond to the gospel according to the Lord's new covenant.

John recorded Jesus teaching His disciples: "If anyone loves Me, He will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our abode with him" (14:23b). Those who have received the indwelling presence of God love God. The indwelling presence of the Spirit is proof of God's acceptance of the servant's response of love towards his Master – Jesus Christ. Love is expressed towards God the Father when belief and faith bear fruit through obedience to the words of Christ. The result is an act of love towards Him through Jesus Christ. The unbroken chain of belief, faith, confession, obedience, baptism, and fulfilled repentance is the only way God allows a servant of sin to express love towards Him and the focus of his response must be exclusively through Jesus.

God is promising to every person enslaved of sin not only freedom from the bondage of sin but His personal presence as well, thus fully restoring broken fellowship. In His parable about a wayward son, Jesus described in physical terms what is taking place on a spiritual level, "But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found" (*Luke* 15:32).

- 1) The father's family included two son's living in fellowship before one chose to leave.
2. The son decided to leave his family and fellowship in order to serve his lust and the world. This is when the father considered him as dead because he became separated from his family – spiritually a slave of sin and servant of Satan.

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The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

3) When the son recognized his bondage to sin he decided to repent by returning to his family. Thus the father restored him to full fellowship and considered him as living – spiritually a born again servant is innocent of all sin, justified, and holy.

God restores broken family fellowship when the servant chooses to return home by embracing his Father's love. As a result of the fulfillment of his obedience to his father's will the formerly wayward servant fulfills the initial stage of his commitment to repent and his confession to honor his father.

In his letter to the *Ephesians* Paul noted how the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is one with Jesus Christ. All of God's children are "strengthened with power through the Holy Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (3:16b-17a). Remember God is One, if the servant is indwelt by the presence of the Spirit; the Spirit is one with God the Father and Jesus Christ. This fulfills the Lord's promise: "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (*John* 14:23b). When the Holy Spirit indwells the newly redeemed and righteous saint the new son of God becomes one with God as well, fully restoring his fellowship with God.

Questions

The Indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is given to the servant as soon as he is receives righteousness and is spiritually resurrected.

Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13-14

- 1) How is a servant resurrected by God?
- 2) When is a servant resurrected?
- 3) What does a servant's resurrection have to do with righteousness?
- 4) Are you resurrected?
- 5) Do you have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit?
- 6) How do you know?
- 7) Are you able to feel His presence?

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Questions

The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

- 8) Do you depend upon physical manifestations of His presence in order to maintain faith in His presence?
- 9) How are faith and feelings reconciled?

The Holy Spirit is only given to those who have believed in the Lord's gospel.
Ephesians 1:13; Acts 2:44a

- 1) What does it mean to have believed in the Lord's gospel in contrast to believing the Lord's gospel?
- 2) Is a servant able to believe in Jesus and yet not be a believer?
- 3) How do you know for sure you have believed in the Lord's gospel?
- 4) Is what you feel in your heart about believing in the Lord as dependable as the Scriptural description of a believer?

The seal of the Holy Spirit assures the saint of his salvation.
1 John 4:13-15, 5:10a; 1 Corinthians 1:21-22

- 1) Do you feel assured?
- 2) How does faith and hope link with assurance?
- 3) Why do you have an expectation of assurance?
- 4) Is the heart of a servant of sin able to lead him to believe he is saved while in fact his spiritual state of being has not changed from serving sin?
- 5) Why do you feel assured?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit "as a pledge of our inheritance" is a partial heavenly gift of the inheritance reserved in heaven for His saints.

Ephesians 1:14a; Galatians 3:27, 29

- 1) Are you presently enjoying a part of your inheritance?
- 2) How do you treat your inheritance?
- 3) What do you think your inheritance is in heaven?
- 4) Do you live life knowing God lives within your body?
- 5) How does knowing God lives in you affect your thoughts, motivations, lifestyle, and relationship decisions?
- 6) How does the indwelling presence of the Spirit affect your attitude towards one another love and unity among the Lord's body?
- 7) Does the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit identify the Lord's church?

Only the Lord's children are "sealed" and have received the "pledge" of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

- 1) Does this Scriptural insight offer you assurance of your salvation?
- 2) What do you think God means by giving you the Spirit as a seal?

Even though a servant must believe, confess, repent, and be baptized, the Spirit is still received by faith. The entire response is an act of belief and faith by the grace of God.
Galatians 3:14a, 3:26

- 1) How do you think faith should be expressed?
- 2) How do you know for certain the Holy Spirit lives within you?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

Only those who have demonstrated love towards Jesus receive the indwelling presence of God.

John 14:23, 21

- 1) How does a servant of sin express love towards Jesus?
- 2) If love is expressed through obedience and works of faith how is grace involved in salvation?
- 3) If love is expressed through a response to the Lord's new covenant stipulations how is love linked with grace?
- 4) Why do you think God described how to love Him as obedience?
- 5) Can you think of some pre-Christian examples of how saints expressed love towards God? What are you learning from their life examples?
- 6) What motivates your love towards God?
- 7) Is why you choose to serve Him as important as serving Him because He must be your Master?
- 8) Why do you serve Jesus?

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is only promised to those who have "believed in Him".

John 7:38-39

- 1) What did Jesus say about believing?
- 2) Do you think His definition of belief offended the people who listened to Him?
- 3) Can you believe someone is capable of serving God and yet still be a servant of sin?
- 4) Are there other ways to receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

5) What did Jesus mean when He said "believe".

6) How did you believe in Jesus?

To ask for the Holy Spirit means the servant is willing to respond with love towards the Lord and His gospel in order to receive the Spirit as promised.

Luke 11:13

1) Have you ever asked for the presence of the Spirit?

2) What did you expect when you asked for the Spirit?

3) How do you know when you receive the indwelling presence of the Spirit?

4) Do you think love and works work together with grace?

5) How does asking Jesus for the Spirit and obedience to the gospel connect?

6) Why do you think asking for the Spirit and prayer are never mentioned as a means for salvation in the new covenant?

A servant does not belong to Jesus if he does not have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9

1) If a servant is not serving Jesus then who is he serving?

2) How do you know for certain whom you are serving?

3) Are you able to feel the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit?

4) How do you know of His presence by faith?

5) How do you know for certain the hope of assurance?

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Section Five: God's Work

Recreated

Only a redeemed son of God is able to honestly proclaim God has given him a new life. Paul wrote, "for by grace you have been saved through faith ... for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (*Ephesians* 2:8a, 10b). The work of God is dependent upon belief and faith in His power to perform the miraculous work of creation within the water of baptism by the work of the Holy Spirit. Very early in His ministry Jesus foretold of this new spiritual blessing of His soon to come New Covenant, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (*John* 3:5).

When the Spirit recreates a servant's spirit in His watery womb of baptism, a uniquely Christian experience has taken place. In his *second* letter to the *Corinthians*, Paul stated: "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come" (5:17). He is not only redeemed back into the family of God, he is a brand new creation as well, holy, innocent, and without sin debt. He is righteous because he is spiritually pure of all sin. He is justified because the new babe is innocent of all sin, he did not inherit the sin of his past life. He is a new babe in a new spiritual land.

He is truly reborn into a new spiritual world. Spiritually, he no longer lives in the old world dominated by the authority of Satan and sin. Even though his body remains dead because of sin, his heart is circumcised because the Spirit recreated his spirit. The new heart, self, innocent conscience, and spirit are spiritually separated from the death of a body still enslaved to lust, sin and death. The new spirit is in fellowship with God and lives in a new spiritual nation and kingdom.

The renewal of his dead physical body cannot take place until its own experience with death, burial, and resurrection. This takes place after the servant physically dies in faith. Upon death he will experience his second resurrection. His first resurrection occurred when the Spirit resurrected his spirit with Jesus Christ within the water of baptism. The Spirit inspired Paul to reveal how the second resurrection will take place: "So also is the resurrection from the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body. The first man is from the earth; the second man is from heaven" (*1 Corinthians* 15:42, 47). Always keep in mind, death is only a transition from one state of being to another, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (*Hebrews* 9:27).

A believer is blessed by two recreations taking place in his life:

- 1) His spirit: when he experiences his death, burial, and resurrection with Jesus.
- 2) His body: when his physical death causes him to enter into the spiritual world to await his new spiritual body.

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

Recreated

When the servant is resurrected with Jesus he receives a living spirit free and innocent of sin. His recreation is a gift of grace given to those who have responded to the Lord with love and faith in His gospel.

Ephesians 2:8a, 10b

- 1) If new life is a gift of grace, why do you think the works required by the gospel are so important?
- 2) Do you feel recreated and new?
- 3) How do you know for certain you are new?
- 4) Are you living life in newness?
- 5) Why is new so important?

The newly created spirit is considered by God as "born again".

John 3:5; 1 John 5:1-5, 10a, 11-12

- 1) Do you feel as if you entered a new and living world?
- 2) Do you feel the newness of life?
- 3) How do you know for certain you are no longer living in the dominion of Satan but in the Lord's kingdom? Are you able to feel the difference of environments?
- 4) What do you think the Lord expects of His newborn child?
- 5) What is your ultimate purpose as the Lord's servant?

A servant is "born again" only by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 3:3b, 8b; Galatians 4:28-29

- 1) When the Lord resurrected your spirit did you feel "new"?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

Recreated

- 2) In what spiritual environment did you experience your resurrection and new birth?
- 3) How is a servant reborn?
- 4) Does baptism play an important part in a servant's rebirth?
- 5) How does prayer and rebirth connect?
- 6) Why is baptism important?
- 7) Is baptism overemphasized in the rebirth of a servant?
- 8) Which response is more important in how a new creation is created: belief, faith, confession repentance, baptism, or a life of faith in Christ?

Every Christians is a "new creation".
2 Corinthians 5:17

- 1) If you are no longer a servant of sin and of the world then where are you spiritually?

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Section Five: God's Work

Regeneration

Regeneration is another term describing what is taking place within the water of baptism. This is the creative process which God uses to recreate a person dead in sin into a new life – his first resurrection, his new spiritual birth. *Titus* wrote, "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" (3:5). Salvation is initially experienced when a slave of sin enters into his death, burial, and resurrection in unity with Christ. The Holy Spirit recreates him into a new life as a freed bond-servant. *John* quoted Jesus foretelling, "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again'" (3:7). Salvation continues on through the servant's new life as he strives to serve God the Father through faith.

What takes place within the water of baptism is a spiritual cleansing only God is able to accomplish. Regeneration is a spiritual miracle. The servant of sin experiences a complete spiritual change of identity when purchased by Jesus. He literally begins a new spiritual life. This is what Jesus spoke of when He foretold of the absolute necessity of being born again. As a result of his new spirit and heart he has a cleansed conscience and a new self ready to learn how to live as a son of God.

Since the whole experience is spiritual it is invisible to all human sense; thus its reality is based entirely upon belief and faith in the promises and faithfulness of God. The servant's fellowship with God the Father is dependent upon the persistence of his confession through his readiness to continually realize his belief and faith in the integrity and power of his Lord's word and promises.

Questions

A number of miracles take place within the water of baptism which includes the recreation of the dead spirit by resurrection and his regeneration into a completely new life and lifestyle.

Titus 3:5

- 1) Does your emergence into a new and separate life remind you of how similar you are to a seed?
- 2) What happens to the original seed?
- 3) What happens to the new plant?
- 4) Is the new plant completely separate from its old existence?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

Regeneration

- 5) Does the new plant have to live in the same environment?
- 6) Are you able to honestly say your life is dramatically different from the old one which the Spirit left behind to rot?
- 7) Are you willing to learn how to live in the new life and creation which God has given to you?

The new servant receives a new identity – he is a son of God, he serves a different Master – Jesus.

Romans 8:13-18; Galatians 4:3-7; 3:29; Hebrews 2:12-13

- 1) If Jesus is your new Master then how do you serve: new life, old life, or a little of each?
- 2) Why must you be willing to relearn how to serve your new Master?
- 3) Is assembly (at church) the only time which you serve Jesus?
- 4) Are you able to partially serve your old master and yet confess your new Master?

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Section Five: God's Work

A New Self

Another part of the servant's recreation by the power of God is the new self. His new self is who he is and is developed through his experiences in life. Upon rebirth he is a new born babe in Christ. This is why it is so important for the new son of God to allow the Spirit to counsel him through life. He is, as a new baby in desperate need to understand the will of God and must learn to focus upon the Word of God in order to grow in a lifestyle of faith. Even though he received righteousness upon his recreation and is holy before God his Father, he needs to relearn how to live life according to God's standard of righteousness. He needs to recognize the often subtle differences between good and evil. This growth process will be evident for the rest of his life and will last throughout eternity.

The Lord's command to "love one another" (1 John 3:23b) highlights the importance of fellowship within the Christian community to help each other to grow and mature into fruitful sons of God. Fellowship protects all believers, helps build vital inter-relationships, and offers a secure and loving setting in which to learn and grow a faith motivated lifestyle and worship. In the body of Christ there are no mature adults in Christ, only children who have achieved differing levels of spiritual development in maturity according to the Lord's perfect standard of righteousness. Within this spiritual environment all are equally saved, righteous, and sanctified servants.

The old self, conscience, heart, and dead body are irreversibly corrupted by sin, this is why they must be separated or circumcised from the new by the Spirit. Paul explained in his letter to the *Romans*, "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 of sin" (6:6). The new life is still attached to the dead body but death is no longer the dominate force of the servant's existence. Spiritual death is a crucifixion from the servant's old life. The servant is united with the Lord's death and His resurrection.

The body, along with all of its desires of lust retains the sin corrupted old self and uncircumcised heart of stone. Over time, as sin satisfied the lusts of the flesh, the original self began to identify with desires of the flesh. The flesh, its hard sin corrupted heart, old self, and sin corrupted conscience, are dead in sin. As a result, they are completely incompatible with the new life. Thus the servant's old existence is separated from his new life in Christ by death, new life, and the Spirit.

Paul stated in his letter to the *Ephesians*, "That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit" (4:22). He revealed a raging inner conflict within the body of every recreated son of God. Even though the servant possesses a recreated spirit, self, conscience, and Spirit circumcised heart, he and the Holy Spirit must live in a body

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A New Self

which is increasingly being corrupted by sin. The old body tries to corrupt the new self just as it did with its original self as it pursues the satisfaction of its lust for evil.

This is why it is so critically important for the new self to allow the Spirit to lead and counsel. The new son of God must relearn everything relating to the righteous standard of God. He must learn the ways of righteousness and take control over the flesh. The only way this is possible is by the guidance of the Spirit through the word of Christ.

The world cannot offer this education and experience. Learning how to live according to God's righteousness is a matter of spiritual life or death. If the babe lives in an environment where he only drinks milk and is never weaned to the regular food of Scriptural knowledge he runs a very real risk of allowing the flesh to dominate his new life. Any servant of Christ who remains a perpetual spiritual babe dramatically increases his risk level to committing spiritual adultery with the world. Spiritual ignorance may affect his attitude and lifestyle choices which could cause him to fall away from fellowship with his brothers and sisters in Christ, upset the Holy Spirit, and distance him from Jesus, and God the Father.

When the Spirit crucified the old self with Christ it died. Not in the sense of complete inaction, it is completely separated from the new life recreated by God. His recreation separated sin and death from the new life in Christ leaving a new and innocent conscience. God created a new self, a new "I", a baby self ready for his training in the new way of righteousness.

The new self is being restored to God's original intent. Since it's learning how to live righteously, beginning as a baby, it is heavily influenced by the behaviors of the body and physical circumstances. All believers must focus upon allowing the Spirit to lead them along life. Spiritual education, fellowship, positive inter-relationships, and life in Christ, are of utmost importance. In fact it is a matter of spiritual life or death for many. God's sheep need feed, protection, and security in order to grow. Jesus promises His loving care but His sheep must also take care of their personal spiritual lives as well as each other in order to facilitate His promises. This is what loving self and one another in Christ is all about.

Just before His ascension back into heaven Jesus "said to Simon Peter, 'Tend My lambs ... Shepherd My sheep ...Tend My sheep'" (*John 21:15b, 16b, 17b*). In a confusing way, to John anyway, Jesus spoke of the absolute necessity of taking care of His sheep, His believers. He knew if after conversion they received nothing but spiritual neglect what would eventually happen. Sheep have to be fed, protected, and nurtured. This is the only way for a new self to develop in a child of God. He must be place in an environment of physical and spiritual love which focuses on spiritual growth.

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A New Self

Remember, "So faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ" (*Romans 10:17*) Fellowship and love for one another will facilitate faith but faith itself can only develop from the word of God. All of the love which fellowship is able to offer cannot substitute even one word of Scripture. His sheep must be fed with Scripture and fellowship in order to develop in righteousness.

A redeemed child of God, even though he is still attached to his sin corrupted flesh, is no longer controlled by the various lusts naturally occurring in the flesh. But he will be influenced by them. In fact the Spirit gives him to power to dominate over the evil desire of the flesh. The believer is now able to live his life relearning righteousness, while in a state of righteousness and sanctification, led by the Holy Spirit. In other words, even though the newly born son of God is holy and righteous, a saint; he still needs to learn how to live a life of righteousness in order to separate his new life from the old.

Spiritually, he does not become more holy or more set apart from the world and Satan because the Spirit has already transferred him to the Lord's kingdom. He is holy, righteous, and sanctified; but he needs to grow and mature in his ability to think and practice the righteous will of God as the Spirit counsels him through the word of God. This is how he grows in righteous living, which is living according to the righteous standard of God's will. This is how he maintains his sanctification, his separation from slavery to sin and the dominion of Satan – the world.

The new spirit is developing its new self and must dominate and control the still rebellious flesh and its old self by allowing the Spirit to counsel him. He must learn to follow His guidance. The flesh and its old nature (the old self) will still try to influence the new self and spirit back into its old ways of serving sin. There will be a constant battle of spirit, self, flesh, and memories from a corrupted conscience, and thoughts of the mind, until physical death finally separates the recreated self and spirit from the body of living death.

In order to finish life in faith, Jesus counsels His children to allow Him to teach and guide them throughout the rest of their lives. In his letter to the *Colossians*, Paul mentioned the importance of learning how to control the old self and the flesh, "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above ... set your minds on the things above ... For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ. Therefore consider the members of your body as dead ... you laid aside the old with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (3:1a, 2a, 3, 5a, 9b-10).

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Section Five: God's Work

A New Self

Questions

The newly born again servant is holy, innocent, owns a cleansed conscience and heart, and his new self is entirely different from his old self.

Romans 6:6; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21, 2:9; Revelation 20:6; Colossians 1:19-23

- 1) What is new about your new self?
- 2) Do you feel holy?
- 3) Do you feel innocent of all sin?
- 4) Do you feel a completely clear conscience?
- 5) Do you feel a renewed and new heart?
- 6) How do you know for sure if what you feel is correct?
- 7) What is the connection between feelings and faith?
- 8) What is the difference between the old and the new?
- 9) Are you expressing the difference in your new lifestyle and worship?
- 10) How do you live your identity – holiness?

The new self must immediately begin to dominate the flesh and its desires to sin.
Ephesians 4:22; Romans 8:5-8, 12-18

- 1) How are you handling the transition from unholiness to righteousness?
- 2) Do you feel the nudges of the flesh overwhelming the new desires of your heart?
- 3) Are you allowing the Spirit to lead your life through the often very difficult beginning stages of Christian maturity?

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Section Five: God's Work

Questions

A New Self

- 4) Why do you think God considers all new Christians as newborn babies?
- 5) Do you think it is important to be weaned off of the milk of the word and onto solid food of in-depth study of God's will?
- 6) Why do you think the power game which the flesh plays in your life is such a critical influence which constantly needs dominated by Spirit leadership?
- 7) Is understanding the knowledge of "good and evil" which God placed in your heart important?
- 8) Why do you think Spirit leadership is so important in the endless battle of temptations and purpose?

The new self must learn the radically different lifestyle of righteousness.
Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 12:6-11; 1 John 2:25-29

- 1) Has your life changed much since your rebirth?
- 2) Does your lifestyle evidence your new life in Christ?
- 3) How do you relearn what you spent a lifetime learning?
- 4) How do you relate to servants of sin and Satan?
- 5) How do you remain separate from the world while living in the world?

The new self must allow the Spirit to counsel his spiritual growth in how to live righteously.
Galatians 5:16-25

- 1) Why is Spirit leadership, counsel, and prayer such an important part of a Christians new life?

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Questions

A New Self

- 2) How does a God focused Spirit led life differ from a world focused life?
- 3) Do you think the difference is important?
- 4) How do you rationalize compromises between your old life and service to Christ?
- 5) To what degree of abstaining from worldly influences and pleasures is the Lord asking in order to keep from compromising His standard of righteous living?

Life for the new self is one of continual renewal.

Colossians 3:1a, 2a, 3, 5a, 9b-10; Romans 12:2

- 1) Do you think renewal ever ends in physical life?
- 2) How is renewal connected to worship?
- 3) How is renewal connected to how you love God?
- 4) Why is renewal important to you?
- 5) Does the world influence your thoughts and choices?
- 6) How do you aggressively engage worldly and fleshly thoughts and desires?
- 7) Are you ever successful?
- 8) Do you find yourself looking to the left, to the right, or backwards with fondness and desire?
- 9) What are the key points of your success stories?
- 10) What do you think causes your failures?
- 11) Why are spiritual failures important to spiritual growth?

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Questions

A New Self

- 12) What lessons do you learn from spiritual setbacks?
- 13) What do you think God is looking for when you consider your thoughts and decisions?
- 14) Is what you place within your heart from the world important to understand?
- 15) What information should dominate in your heart?
- 16) Do you think renewal is an important part of worship?
- 17) Is renewal an expression of love towards Jesus?