

# THE PATH TO HOLINESS



Jesse C. Jones

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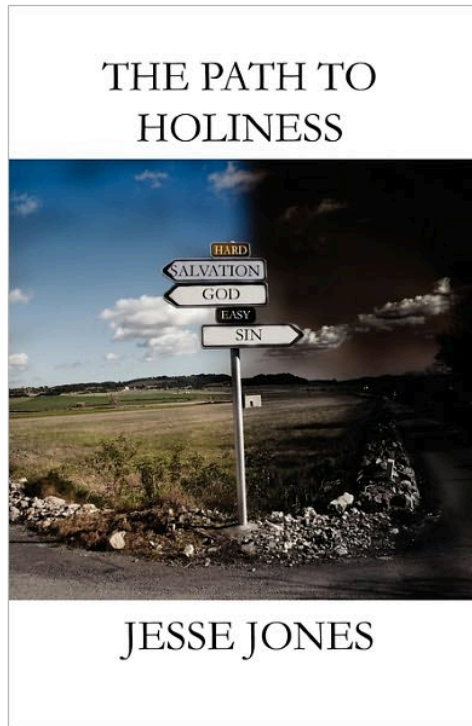
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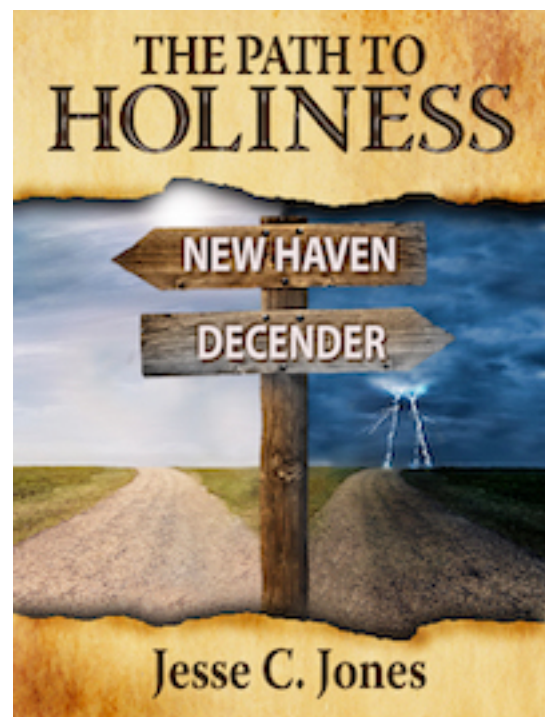


## About the Cover Art



“The Path to Holiness” was originally published in paperback by Publish America in 2011. That publishing agreement was completed and the books are no longer readily available in print. Having published many other books for this author and made them available free online via Scribd, we wanted to add this book to the collection of his works there.

Special thanks to Rex Morache for helping us update the cover that you see on the book now for our online publication. You can see more of his work to convey important thoughts in graphic format on flickr [here](#). The words on the signpost ‘NEW HAVEN’ and ‘DECENDER’ are a rather obvious play on words suggested by the author and definitely not a misspelling in case you were wondering!



## **The Path to Holiness**

I chose the above title to reflect my understanding of what the Bible tells us about God's plan and purpose in sending His only Son to earth in the form of a man. We know that Jesus came to restore God's chosen ones to favor through spiritual regeneration. The path He chose is marked with milestones described herein.

Several years ago I became aware of the fact that I did not fully understand what Jesus did for me when He went to the cross and shed His blood that I might receive forgiveness for sin, be reconciled with God the Father, and receive my inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Questions arose in my mind about how His forgiveness could be made real to me personally. What would change within me when I actually received forgiveness, and what did Jesus expect of me thereafter? How could I become born again and, what do terms like the "washing of regeneration" and "sanctification" mean?

I began looking for answers by trying to find a passage of scripture in the Bible that listed all the things that occur when a sinner receives salvation through Jesus Christ. To my great surprise I discovered the most complete

listing was given in the Old Testament (OT), in the Book of Ezekiel, Chapter 36:25-27. Although this passage of scripture is part of a prophesy given by Ezekiel to Israel, we know that it applies to those who are grafted in, as well (Hosea 2:23; Romans 9:25). After my initial discovery in Ezekiel, I learned that finding an answer to a question in the Bible often leads to other questions, whose answers lead to still more questions, ad infinitum. That is the way this writing came into existence: an answer to one question led to another question, etc., until I finally realized I was writing a book.

I wish I could say this was the end of questions about the “way” of Jesus Christ, but I know better; the knowledge that God has placed within the Bible runs deep, but He has made that knowledge available to men through His Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:7-10). I pray you will be drawn by the promise in 1 Corinthians 2:12, which states that God has freely given us this knowledge: all we have to do is to seek it diligently.

*JESSE C. JONES*

## Believing In or Into Christ

I have encountered a lot of confusion among Christians about the difference between believing **in** Jesus Christ, and believing **into** Him. In many versions of the Bible the Greek word “*eis*”, which means “into,” or “one,” is often interpreted incorrectly by the Greek word “*ev*,” meaning within, or among. A comment from the Recovery Version of the NT on John 3:16 is helpful in understanding the difference between these two prepositions.

“Believing into the Lord is not the same as believing (in) Him. To believe (in) Him is to believe that He is true and real, but to believe into Him is to receive Him and be united with him as one. The former is to acknowledge a fact objectively, the latter is to receive a life subjectively” (parenthetical words added). Many of today’s Christians never get beyond believing “in” Him. To believe into Christ means that a spiritual relationship has been established much like the physical and spiritual bond between husband and wife in a godly marriage: they *know* each other intimately. Matthew 19:5-6 KJV describes this relationship in this way, “*For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*” We must know

Christ personally for Him to guide, direct, and use our lives for His purposes on earth. Believing in Jesus Christ involves recognizing Him as the Son of God and believing that He came to forgive our sins, but it fails to recognize the real purpose of His coming: to claim us as his own and to make us holy, like Himself. Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament says, "Into, (*eis*) denotes *inward union, participation; not in order to bring about* the union, for that has been effected. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, 27." "Baptizing into the name of the Holy Trinity implies a spiritual and mystic union with him. *Eis, into*, is the proposition commonly used with *baptize*. See Acts 8:16; 29:3,5; 1 Corinthians 1:13, 15; Galatians 3:27." Compare John 3:16 Greek New Testament (GNT) to that given in many English versions of the Bible: "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" The significant difference is in the phrase "*everyone believing into Him*" in the Greek, versus "*whosoever believeth in him*" in the King James Version (KJV). I think the difference is clear and important to our understanding of this vital scripture.

In talking to Christian acquaintances I have found that most believers seem to initially start their walk with belief in Christ, rather than belief into Him. This was my own experience when I first believed. I knew Jesus as the



Son of God, and knew that He had forgiven my sins, but I had no personal relationship with Him, nor did I know that such a thing was even possible. I knew who God the Father and Jesus were, but I had little, or no knowledge about the Holy Spirit, or about His relationship to man. This seemed to be enough in the early part of my life, when I was under the influence of my parents, friends, and teachers, but when I left the safety and comfort of home I was no longer protected in this way, and the glitter and glamour of the world were very enticing. It took many years for God to get me to the place that He could trust me with more of Himself. Like Paul, it took a Damascus Road encounter to make me realize that Jesus Christ was an actual person, interested in me personally, and who wanted to share my life. The men who were with me also shared this encounter as Christ entered the room where we were praying. The effect on my life was dramatic: I knew for the first time He wanted me to believe *into* Him, to realize that He had given me a new nature, and that I was to be “one” with Him. Later, I realized that I had received the Holy Spirit, for I had the witness within that I was a child of God (Romans 8:16).

Believing is from the heart, thus Romans 10:9 says, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus {Jesus as Lord}, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*” This says that if we believe in

our hearts and confess with our mouths (both parts of the body), we will receive salvation, but how does this belief come about? The answer to this is given in Hebrews 4:2, which describes some that heard the gospel preached but did not believe for lack of (saving) faith from God (Ephesians 2:8). The essential Word did not result in belief within their hearts due to a lack of faith. Faith is the power unto belief, much like electricity is the power for household appliance operation.

When we believe into Jesus Christ and join Him in death and resurrection we begin to see change in our lives. Our human spirit is *quickened* (made alive), and we receive God's Holy Spirit to guide, comfort, and teach us. Thus, it is by joining in His death and resurrection that we begin to *know* Christ. *Knowing* (in the biblical sense) comes through the spirit, and when we *know* Christ in this way our spirit begins to witness that we are sons of God.

### **What Is The Meaning Of The Resurrection?**

Romans 6:5 says *"For if we have been planted together with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."* Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament (NT) clarifies this by paraphrasing, "If we were united with Him in the likeness of His death (that will not be the full extent of the union), but we shall be also united with Him in His resurrection." Our old sin

nature died with Jesus on the cross, and our new nature rises up with Christ in resurrection. In some wonderful and inexplicable way Jesus took our sin nature with Him when He died on the cross. The sin nature is, in a sense, the sin factory. It is the sin nature we inherited from Adam that gives us the inclination to commit sins. At the cross Jesus' shed blood washes away the sins we have committed in the past (Romans 3:25), and in resurrection He gives us a new godly nature. Ephesians 2:2-6, says that God has "*quicken*ed," us together with Christ, and raised us up to sit in heavenly places at the right hand of the Father. We are no longer inclined to commit sins by our nature, but are now free to choose God's guidance, or rely on the worldly ways we learned before receiving salvation. Jesus actually willed that we would be with Him on the cross when He prayed at Gethsemane. John 17:24 says, "*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*"

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is arguably the most important occurrence in the Bible, for it is the reason for our hope and faith (1 Peter 1:3, 4, 21). It is through the resurrection of Christ that we are justified. Romans 4:25 says, "*Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.*" Jesus Christ is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us in our every failure.

As mediator He continues to shepherd His sheep to insure that we arrive in heaven and receive eternal life. In the same manner that Christ was resurrected we also shall be raised. Romans 8:11 says, “*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you*”. Christ was the firstfruit, we constitute the great harvest that will be gathered at rapture/resurrection.

When Christ takes His bride from the earth at rapture/resurrection we will receive our immortal bodies in accordance with the promise in 1 Corinthians 15:35-44. We will then join Him in returning to heaven. The immortal bodies that Christ is preparing for us will be like His resurrected body (1 John 3:2). In the Bible our earthly body is commonly referred to as our abode, the house in which our human spirit (the real us) lives. As on earth, the many abodes in heaven represent the many members of the body of Christ, which is God's temple. The abode that Christ is preparing for us may be the immortal body we will be clothed in for eternity. Christ fashions this immortal body and joins our spirit/soul to it; it is then our abode for eternity (1 Corinthians 15:38). 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done,*

*whether it be good or bad.*” Vincent’s Word Studies in the NT indicates that the interpretation of this is that we receive these things through the medium of the body. This seems to imply that the believer’s immortal body will in some way manifest the works done in our flesh through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

### **What does it mean to be *in Christ*?**

Being *in Christ* is a biblical term that seems to be little understood by believers in today’s world. I wonder if the reason for this is, at least in part, due to the dearth of teaching on the resurrection, righteousness, renewing of the mind, sanctification, the body of Christ, and conforming us to Christ’s image. In his book entitled “The Normal Christian Life” Watchman Nee describes what being *in Christ* means by using the description of man’s condition of being dead to sin, but still alive to the law. He bases his argument on Romans Chapter 7, which explains that we are not under law, but under grace. To quote from pages 155-56 in this book: “Grace means that God does something for me; law means that I do something for God. God has certain holy and righteous demands He places upon me: that is the law. Now if Law means that God requires something of me for their fulfillment, then deliverance from Law means that He no longer requires that from me, but



Himself provides it. Law implies that God requires me to do something for him; deliverance from Law implies that He exempts me from doing it, and that in grace He does it Himself. I (where *I* is the *carnal* man of Chapter 7:14) need to do nothing for God: that is deliverance from Law. The trouble in Romans 7 is that man in the flesh tried to do something for God. As soon as you try to please God in that way, then you place yourself under Law, and the experience of Romans 7 begins to be yours". Nee goes on to point out that there is nothing wrong with the Law, the problem lies with the unrighteousness of the person upon which the law places demands. "The trouble is not that the Law's demands are unjust, but that I am unable to meet them." In his interpretation of this scripture Watchman Nee illustrates how our deliverance from the law is like the woman and the two husbands in Romans 7:1-4. The first husband is the law, and the second husband is Christ. The woman has a dilemma: she cannot be married to both husbands and, unfortunately, she is married to the less desirable one, the Law. Since the first husband is never going to die, the only solution is for the woman to die. Romans 7:4 says, "*Wherefore, my brethren, ye are also become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*" In dying we are freed from the Law and are united with Christ in

resurrection. If we are not *in Christ* we are still under the Law. This is how we are *in Christ*: by accepting the death of our old life and joining Christ in His death on the cross. In the power of Christ's resurrection our lives become fruitful, and we become empowered for all the claims that God's holiness will make upon us. It is by being *in Christ* that His righteousness becomes our own, and our sins are washed away by His precious blood.

As I look back on a lifetime of church attendance I recall very little teaching on the meaning of the resurrection, and none on the meaning of being *in Christ*. 1 John 5:18 New Living Translation (NLT) says: "*We know that those who have become part of God's family do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot get his hands on them.*" This does not mean that we no longer commit sins, but that we now have a choice **not** to commit them: we are no longer slaves to sin. This means that when we are regenerated in resurrection we will not **practice**, or **live** in sin. And when we abide *in Christ* the evil one cannot touch us. 1 John 3:5-6 says, "*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known [knoweth] him.*" Ephesians 1:1-20, uses the term "*in Christ*" twelve times, so we know that this

phrase is important. This passage of scripture refers to the riches given to those that are *in Christ*:

**Faithfulness**  
**Spiritual blessing**  
**Being holy and without blame**  
**Foreordained to be chosen**  
**Redemption**  
**Remission of offenses**  
**Knowing the mystery of His will**  
**Grace**  
**Wisdom and prudence**  
**Restoration to perfect unity**  
**Inheritance**  
**Sealed by the Spirit of promise**  
**Hope**  
**Power**

This list includes most, if not all, of the blessings that believers inherit through being *in Christ*. Still, this does not translate into a working knowledge of what it means to be *in Christ* to me. Possibly one key to personal realization of what being *in Christ* means is related to discernment of the body of Christ. If we are where the Lord wants us to be in His body (the church), and are seeing His gift(s) manifested through us unto the edifying of the body members, we are certainly *in Christ*. Jesus Christ spoke the church into being to create a special

relationship with those that believe *into* Him. He identified them as His body, as described in Ephesians 5:22-33. This passage makes several important points:

- 1) We are to submit ourselves to Christ for He is the head of the church. Just as the brain controls the functions of all the cells and organs of the human body, Christ is to control the actions of the church.
- 2) Christ loves the church and gave Himself for it so that He could sanctify and cleanse it with washing of water by the Word. If the church is hearing and following Christ's directions He will provide teaching that will cleanse the body.
- 3) Christ's shepherding of the church will result in a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, and if one goes astray, he finds it and gathers it up in his arms and returns to the flock.
- 4) Christ nourishes and cherishes the church. Christ feeds and protects the church just as the Robin feeds and protects her chicks.

5) We are members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

In the same way that we protect the members of our body,

Christ protects the members of His body.

6) We will become one (spirit) with Christ in the same manner that

a husband and wife become one flesh (see 1 Corinthians 6:17). If

we are on God's track for our lives our human spirit becomes

one (over time) with the Holy Spirit in the same way that a godly

couple begin to act alike, and function as a unit, over time.

Ephesians 5:22-32 describes the relationship we have with Christ after we have believed into him, for comparison is made to a man and woman after they have been married, and the union has been consummated. Christ gathers us together into His mystical body and begins the process of sanctification, the renewing of our minds, so that we can think and act like Christ. This is referred to in the bible as *conforming us to the image of Christ*. The analogy of the union between a man and woman in marriage is perfect. When a man and woman come together as one flesh each one must undergo some reprogramming (renewing) of the mind so that they can come together in agreement on issues that initially were divisive. In the same way, the Holy Spirit shows us God's will in the situations and decisions we face, and if we



accept His guidance, gradually we become more Christlike. John 16:14 says that the Holy Spirit receives from Christ and declares it unto us. The decision to follow God's guidance, or not, is a question of the will, which resides in our soul. Ephesians 6:6 GNT says that we do the will of God from our soul. Most English versions of the NT incorrectly substitute the word heart for soul in this passage.

Possibly the most difficult scripture to grapple with in regard to being *in Christ* is Ephesians 2:5-6, which says: "*Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" Our inclination may be to think that this refers to the period after rapture and resurrection, but I can find no support for this view. A quote on this scripture from Vincent's Word Studies in the NT says this: "Even now we sit there in Him, and shall sit with Him in the end." I think there is little doubt that this scripture means just what it says. Just as we are in Christ's body on earth (the church), in some mysterious way there is a part of us that resides in the heavenlies *in Christ* at this very moment.

Let's summarize what we have discussed above about being *in Christ*.

- 1) Christ has gathered us into His mystical body where we reside (abide) under his protection, safe from unwarranted attacks of the evil one.

- 2) The purpose that Christ tries to fulfill in the members of His body is that of conforming us to His image: making us like Him in every thought and deed. He does this through the renewing of our mind (biblical heart).
- 3.) When Christ's body is functioning as it should He can nourish and teach us through the gifts that are in operation. Spiritual gifts are given specifically to buildup and temper the body. The fruit of the Spirit is plentiful in this environment. Agape love is the principal fruit that should be manifested by the body. It is God's love that identifies us as being *in Christ*.
- 4) When we are *in Christ* and Christ is *in us* we are living proof of the answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17:21-23.
- 5) One who abides *in Christ* does not sin habitually, for he is in fellowship with God and thus cannot live in fellowship with sin.

### **Do I Have Anything Inside Of Me That Says I Am *In Christ*?**

This is a more difficult question to answer than the inverse: What do we have inside of us that says we have Christ in us? Romans 8:16 says that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and verse 9 identifies the Spirit as being both the Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ. Some believers I have talked to seem doubtful about having this witness, but my

personal experience was that very shortly after I received the Holy Spirit I realized that I was a child of God. This witness in the heart was a key principle in John Wesley's ministry: it was the proof to him that he was a Christian (from "John Wesley", by Basil Miller, pg. 63). However, understanding the phrase *in Christ* is more elusive, and identifying what it is within us that confirms this seems even more difficult. There are many scriptures that mention the feelings and beliefs we have when we believe into Christ:

1 John 3:14 says, "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*"

1 John 5:1 states that "*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*"

1 John 5:10 says, "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*"

1 John 2:29 says "*If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*"

We know from 1 John 3:14, that if we have God's agape love for the members of Christ's body, we have part in the resurrection. Also, if we live righteously, we know that we are born of Him. Being born of Him certainly implies that we are part of, or *in Christ*, just as we are part of, or "in," our own

earthly parents. *Knowing*, or sensing this fact as a reality in my nature, seems to be more elusive, however.

Before we *know* Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives we can do wrong and our conscience seems to excuse us. Hebrews 10:22, indicates that our conscience is in our heart, and we have noted above that God gives us a new heart when we believe *into* Christ. As a result of receiving this new heart, things begin to change in our lives: when we do something wrong it bothers us, and we do not want to repeat the same offense. Our goals and ambitions begin to change as well, and we find that our priorities get rearranged. All this happens over time, and with some of us it takes a considerable period of time before we begin to recognize these changes. Commenting on 2 Corinthians 5:17, Oswald Chambers says: “When we are born again, the Holy Spirit begins to work His new creation in us, and there will come a time when there is not a bit of the old order left. . . How are we going to get the life that has no lust, no self-interest, no sensitivity to pokes, the love that is not provoked, that thinketh no evil, that is always kind? The only way is by allowing not a bit of the old life to be left; but only simple, perfect trust in God, such trust that we no longer want God’s blessings, but only want Himself.”

As noted above, Christ has placed us into His mystical body, and He describes this as being like a marriage, when a husband and wife become one flesh after being together for some time. As Christ renews our mind, a process that takes time, we begin to act and think like Him. 1 Corinthians 6:17 says when we are joined to the Lord we become one spirit, just like husband and wife become one flesh. In the same way that we sense the development of this relationship in marriage, I believe we can sense becoming one spirit with Christ. I recognize this as I become aware of Christ guiding my thoughts, words, and actions. I begin to ask myself what Christ would have me do, or what He may be trying to do, in all the situations that I encounter. Sometimes I feel like an impartial observer as I see Him manifesting some aspect of His nature through my body without me consciously doing anything at all.

Some time ago I encountered an estranged member of my church body who nurtured a lot of hurt feelings and ill will toward those with which I fellowship. As I approached her she seemed to stiffen, and I was not sure that she would respond to my reaching out to her. At first she was very cold and accusatory, but all at once I felt God loving her through me, and I began to see an immediate melting of her iciness. I did nothing to cause this, nor was it in my nature to love her in that way; it was totally God showing her the agape



love that He had for her, using my body: I was as overwhelmed as she was. I was blessed to see the power of God's love in action, which no obstacle can withstand. I wish this happened a lot more often. This is another way that I become aware of the fact that I am *in Christ*: I am in Him and He can use my abode (body) any way that He sees fit.

Another way that I think we can sense being in Him is through the confidence we have that He has our life under His control. I think that most regenerated believers have the sense that God has a plan for their lives, and that Christ (through the Holy Spirit) is working to bring it to fruition. In one sense all of us receive a *call* from God to do something with our lives. Many that enter the ministry or become missionaries say that they were *called*, but all true believers should know what God has *called* them to do in their lives while on earth.

I believe we get a strong signal that we are *in Christ* when we begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit. John 15:4 says "*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*" The branches (believers) can only bear fruit when they are connected to the vine (Christ), and are continually being fed by life-giving nourishment (wisdom from the Holy Spirit). Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit as

love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Love is the principal fruit; I do not believe there is any power on earth that can stand against an outpouring of God's agape love.

Believers know that they belong to God, and that they are going to meet Him one day to join Him forever. When we are *in Christ* we begin to know His will and desire to follow his direction in our daily living. We begin to recognize a number of things that we can no longer do, and the number of these things increases as we mature *in Christ*. We begin to have an emotional love for Christ, and to enjoy expressing it in worshipping Him. As our prayer life develops we find ourselves turning more often to Him for our own, and other's, needs. We finally get to the place where we go to Him just to talk about things; in short we begin to develop a close relationship with Jesus Christ, the creator of everything that exists in heaven and on earth. More and more we begin to think and act like Christ: we begin to be conformed to His image, we have believed *into Christ* and we are now *in Christ*. If that isn't enough to boggle your mind I don't know what is!

## Chapter 2

### **The Wonderful Work Of The Cross**

Some time ago I read a book that drew my attention to the fact that I did not really understand all that Jesus Christ did for believers through His death on the cross, and His later resurrection and ascension. I had a working knowledge of what was accomplished there, but when I began to consider things on a deeper level, I realized that I did not have answers to many very fundamental questions about what Christ did by going to the cross. Shortly thereafter I began jotting down questions that seemed pertinent to a study on this subject. These questions, and the answers that I found by searching the scriptures, are given below.

#### **What Did Jesus Christ Do For Us In His Death And Resurrection?**

A most significant passage of scripture relative to this question is Ezekiel 36:25-27 New International Version (NIV): *“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”* Although this promise is for the

Jewish remnant that will receive Jesus Christ during the last days, it applies to all those that are grafted in: those under the new covenant that have believed *into* Jesus Christ (Romans 9:22-26). The individual promises listed in Ezekiel 36:25-27 encompass all the things Jesus did for us through His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His later ascension to heaven at the right hand of God to become our intercessor and mediator, so we need to understand each one of them:

### **1. He cleanses us from impurities and idols.**

It seems clear from many scriptures in the Bible that Jesus separates us from our sins through His blood shed for us by His death on the cross, and He washes us clean with His written and spoken word, the logos and rhema. John 3:5 says that man must be born by water and spirit to enter the Kingdom of God. I do not believe that the mention of water here refers to our physical birth: it would seem to be unnecessary to state that a person must be born physically in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Nor do I believe that the reference to water here refers primarily to water baptism, which is the outward symbol of a change that has occurred on the inside of a person. John the Baptist's baptism was unto repentance, which is a necessary step for a person to enter the Kingdom of God; but baptism unto repentance must be followed

by baptism in the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5 says. *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”* Among other things, rising out of the water in baptism is symbolic of our flesh having been washed clean, and our hearts having been purified by the blood of Christ. Jesus, when speaking to His followers in John 15:3, indicates that they were clean through the Word spoken unto them; and in talking to Peter at the last supper Jesus reiterated that they were clean, but not all (speaking of Judas). They were clean by the Word ministered by Jesus, and this cleansing was required before the Holy Spirit could come to reside within them. This cleansing is like pruning a vine, it removes the vestige of sins (dead growth) previously committed through our flesh, and unlike cleansing by the blood, needs to be repeated for the rest of our lives. Ephesians 5:26 says that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church by the washing of water by the Word. Both blood and water flowed from Jesus’ side when the soldier pierced it with a spear after His death on the cross (John 19:34), and I believe this is symbolic of what happens to us when we are *in Christ*: the blood is shed for our forgiveness, and we are cleansed by the washing of regeneration (the water and the blood).



1 John 5:7-8 says there are three witnesses to the fact of salvation through Christ in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and there are three witnesses on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood. The parallelism between these verses of scripture is striking. God's Holy Spirit witnesses with our human spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16). Thus, we know we have the Holy Spirit within us, and that He has claimed us as His own. Cleansing by the washing of water begins with the Father drawing us to Christ through His written and spoken word (John 6:44). Jesus' blood shed on the cross allowed the Father to forgive our sins, and the sprinkling of Jesus blood within our hearts purges our conscience, and cleans us inwardly. Although baptism is a symbol of this cleansing, the purification bath dates from the time of Moses in the OT. At that time it symbolized the purification of the betrothed Jewish bride as she prepared herself for the coming of the bridegroom. In the same way, we are to prepare for the return of Christ by dedicated study (washing) of the Word and following the leading (renewal) of the Holy Spirit.

This cleansing process, which begins with God the Father drawing us to Christ, continues during our regeneration and subsequent sanctification through the renewing of our minds. I believe this can be understood by

comparing it to taking a bath. We scrub ourselves clean in the bath water, but the dirt remains all around us in the water. When we open the drain the dirt goes down the sewer, forever separated from, and no longer identified with us: we are as far from that dirt as the east is from the west. This is like the process involved in believing *into* Jesus Christ. First, the Father starts the washing process by drawing us to Christ. This step in the process often takes years, especially for those of us who are very enamored with the world. As God the Father allows us to get into difficulties of our own making, we gradually turn to the spiritual realm for help, and the Holy Spirit begins to wash, or teach us with the Word. Finally, we get cleansed from the vestiges of past sins, and we are ready to become one with the Lord, but we are still dirty on the inside, and our sins (the dirt) are still all around us. Our flesh has been washed clean and we have cast our past sins on Jesus, but Jesus had to shed His blood on the cross for our sins to be annihilated (washed down the drain). His shed blood also purges our conscience from dead works (Hebrews 9:14, 10:22), and cleans us on the inside. With the washing of the Word, and His shed blood Jesus Christ has done everything necessary for us to join Him in His death on the cross: He is the first fruit, and we are the following great harvest. It is by joining Christ in death on the cross, by giving up the control of our lives to

Him, that He is able to make us part of His glorious resurrection and break the power of sin in our lives. Romans 6:3-6 says, *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* The definition of the Greek word used here for “*baptism*” includes the phrase “to cleanse or purify by washing”.

Our vessels (bodies) must be clean, inside and out, and our old man (sin nature) must be crucified in order for the Holy Spirit to come and take up residence within. Christ does this in three ways: He cleanses us through washing of the Word, He purges our conscience (heart) of the guilt associated with sin through His shed blood, and He replaces our old nature (the sin factory) with His very own nature via the Holy Spirit..

The act of destroying our sins on the cross is portrayed in the OT by the priest sacrificing for the sins of the Israelites. In Leviticus 16:20-28 God describes the sin offering for making atonement. In this ceremony Aaron

would lay his hands on the head of the scapegoat and confess the sins of the Israelites, thus (spiritually) placing their sins on the scapegoat. The scapegoat was then led away into the wilderness where he was abandoned and left to die. This is symbolic of Jesus bearing the sins of many on the cross (Hebrews 9:28). He was condemned and led away outside the walls of the city (symbolic of the scapegoat's wilderness), where He was left to die on the cross, annihilating our sins forever.

Whereas the offering of atonement for the Israelites had to be repeated each year because the Israelites retained their old nature and continued to sin, Jesus took our sins **and** our sin nature by His death on the cross, and He gave us a new nature in resurrection. If our sin nature was not eliminated we would continue to sin *willfully*, without guilt or remorse after Christ paid for our sins by His death on the cross. Hebrews 9:12 describes this perfect work of Christ and states that He obtained “***eternal redemption for us***” by “*entering **once** into the Holy Place*” (emphasis mine). This scripture points out the difference between the work of the OT priests in casting the sins of the Israelites on the head of the scapegoat, and that of Jesus on our behalf on the cross.

## **2. He gives us a new heart.**

The biblical heart clearly is the vital part of material man: much more than just an organ (pump) that moves blood through the body. In biblical times, and up to the middle-ages, the word “heart” was understood to mean the inner being of man, the fountain of all he does and the source of his thoughts, desires, words, and actions. This is the meaning of the word “heart” as used in the Bible. God says that He will remove our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh. I think it is obvious that God does not remove any of man’s vital organs when this occurs, so He must be talking about removing something immaterial that causes us to have hardened hearts; something that causes us to have opinions and thoughts that would characterize us as being hardhearted. Where do these thoughts and opinions come from?

As we have various experiences we translate the essential facts learned, including the outcomes, into memories that are stored in our brain, which is an element of the biblical heart. Unfortunately, many of these memories were acquired before we met Christ, and, as a result, they were developed under the influence of the sin nature that we were born with. These stored memories are recalled when we experience identical, similar, or related occurrences, using techniques and processes (computer-like brain routines) that are not well

understood, and no one can adequately explain. Some of these routines were obviously programmed by God while we were still in the womb. Some of these routines (e.g. bodily control functions) do not change with experience, but are affected by illness and age. Others change as we have new or related experiences; and some are actually developed as we gain new knowledge. Using these routines, and the stored memories we have, we begin to derive the same emotions and feelings from identical, or very similar, experiences. In effect, our mind (biblical heart) is closed to other possible outcomes. This is what I believe God calls *hardening* of the heart. When God refers to a heart of stone in this scripture I believe He is describing the condition of our hearts hardened in this way. When God (the master programmer) gives us a new heart of flesh He does some basic reprogramming in our mind, so that we can accept (or at least consider) the outcome (feeling, emotion, or action) that He desires, and not just react in the same old worldly way we have in the past. When we are regenerated in Christ we are truly free for the first time in our lives. We are no longer a slave to the “*old man*” (old program), but can choose to follow the new program we receive from God through the Holy Spirit. This is what I believe Hebrews 9:14 is referring to by stating that the blood of Christ purges our consciences from “*dead works*”.

If this is difficult to accept, consider some of the experiments performed by efficiency experts to increase creativity. The goal of these experiments is to get the subjects to purposely refuse to accept the solution they are first drawn to, the one that their past experiences would cause them to select, and identify other, and sometimes better, answers. In the same way, with this new executive program that God provides, we can choose to accept His input (from the Holy spirit), and we can begin to renew (reprogram) our minds in accordance with Romans 12:2.

As described by the Bible, the part of the heart that seems to be primarily affected by this change is the conscience. Hebrews 10:22 Recovery Version says, *“Let us come forward to the Holy of Holies with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water”*. Watchman Nee in his book entitled: “The Normal Christian Life”, says that the barrier between God and unregenerate man is due to this evil conscience. Now, through the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, that barrier has been removed, and God makes this known to us by documenting it in His Word. When we believe and accept that the conscience is cleansed, the sense of guilt is removed, and we no longer have an evil

conscience toward God. *“Blessed is the man whom the Lord will not impute (reckon) sin”* (Romans 4:8 ).

A very important precursor to receiving a new heart is forgiveness of our past sins, the memories of which are stored in our mind. These are the sins that result in the guilt in our conscience. Jesus not only destroyed the sin nature we inherited from Adam, but He also took our past sins upon Himself when He shed His blood on the cross. I believe that we can receive this forgiveness if we truly accept the fact that Christ shed His blood for this very purpose. This is an extremely important principle: if we do not accept this forgiveness we basically reject Christ’s work on the cross. Matthew 6:14 says, *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”*. I believe this scripture also applies to our own trespasses: if we cannot accept forgiveness for them our heavenly Father cannot forgive us. This is not to say that God refuses to forgive us, but it is impossible because we have refused to be washed clean. Christ freed us from slavery to a sin nature; now we are free to choose God’s will, which we know through the indwelling Holy Spirit. We can choose to agree with God and accept forgiveness for our own sins.



### 3. He puts a new spirit within us.

Several scriptures refer to the fact that God made man's spirit: Ecclesiastes 12:7 and Zecharian. 12:1 indicate that God "*gave*" and "*formed*" man's spirit. Our spirit reflects who we really are, for God is a spirit (John 4:24), and we are made in the image of God. Psalm 139:13 NIV says, "*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*" I believe this scripture refers to our human spirit, for we know that our *being* is really our spirit that resides in the abode (body) that God forms in the womb. Our spirit resides in our earthly bodies until the body dies, it then returns to God (Ecclesiastes 3:21, 12:7, and Acts 7:59). The phrase "... *thou hast covered me in my mother's womb*", seems to indicate that God covers the *being* (human spirit) of a person with a body while in the womb.

It is by and through our human spirit that we receive inspiration, discernment, and understanding from God (Job 32:8). Thus, it is through our human spirit that we get our guidance (communication) from God. Adam forfeited his relationship with God in the Garden of Eden and passed this broken relationship on to us, his descendants. Therefore, at birth our human spirit is dead (out of communication with God), and we need some way for our relationship to be restored. This is exactly what Jesus Christ did for us

through His death and resurrection: our body is cleansed and our spirit is regenerated (quickened), and we are reconciled to God. This is what is referred to as a “*new spirit*” in the passage from Ezekiel.

#### **4. He gives us His Spirit.**

In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist states that he came to baptize with water unto repentance, but One coming after him would baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. In John 1:33, the Baptist identified Jesus as that One, and reaffirmed that He is the One which baptizes with the Holy Spirit. There can be no doubt that Jesus, the Son of God, is the One who baptizes believers with the Holy Spirit, and He does this when we discern the meaning of the cross, and join Him in the death of our old sinful nature. Romans 6:4 says, “*Therefore we are buried by baptism with him into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*”. Many Christians are confused about this baptism: they wonder if they have received the Holy Spirit. They are in good company: some in the NT did not receive when they were baptized in the name of the Lord, and some received the baptism of the Holy Spirit before they had heard the preaching of the Gospel. You cannot put God in a box on this: only He knows the perfect timing in your life for Him to give you more of Himself. To those that have questions about

this part of Jesus' purpose in coming to earth I would encourage them with these words: Jesus comes to those who would become believers promising to **give** them the Holy Spirit, and in other scriptures He promises to **give** the Holy Spirit to those that **ask**, so if you feel that you have not received the Holy Spirit, all you need to do is **ask**. Hopefully, the remainder of this discussion on the Holy Spirit will provide further encouragement.

Romans 8:16 says that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our human spirit that we are children of God. I know this to be true for I have a vivid memory of not having this witness at the age of 20 years, but having it at the age of 33 years. At 20 I had a very devout friend who often spoke of her confidence about where she would be going at death: she knew that she belonged to God (had the witness), and that He would welcome her into His kingdom when she died. My response to her bold attestation was to question how she could be so confident: I did not have any such witness even though I knew Jesus, and thought of Him as my Savior. As a child I had been taught that Jesus took my sins by His death on the cross, but I did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, nor did I have any spiritual understanding of what He did in resurrection: I did not *know* Him. As described in the Recovery Version (RV) of the NT in comments on John 3:16, I believed that He was true and real, but

I had not received Him and been united with Him as one. At age 33 I had a personal encounter with Christ and my whole understanding of who He was, what He wanted with me, and how He would relate to me in achieving His goal for my life changed. For the first time in my life I realized that Christ was a living (spiritual) being interested in having a personal relationship with me. I didn't think about the promise in Romans 8:16 right away, but as soon as I did I realized that it was true: I now had the witness in my spirit.

God gives us Himself (the Holy Spirit) to sanctify us (make us holy). Sanctification is accomplished by reprogramming (renewing) our minds as described in Romans 12:2 RV: *"And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect."* The Holy Spirit is our source for knowing the will of God, and when He is in us that knowledge is made available to our human spirit in every situation and decision we face (1 Corinthians 2:11-14). Our soul plays the part of arbiter; it is the mediator between the human spirit and the body. It receives knowledge from the human spirit and from the body (the mind, part of the biblical heart). As arbiter, the soul assesses the degree of resistance in the body (flesh) and determines whether the mind can be reprogrammed with God's will for that

situation. If the situation involves a *stronghold*, some iniquity that we regard (Psalms 66:18), the mind will not accept the new information, at least not at that time. This is described in Galatians 5:17, which says that the flesh lusts against the Spirit so that it prevents us from doing what the Spirit contends. If we successfully receive God's reprogramming we take a step toward being more like Christ. Galatians 5:17 also says that the Spirit lusts against the flesh. Thus, the Spirit and the flesh are in conflict. If the Spirit prevails, you are free indeed. Romans 8:29 RV says: "*Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.*" The Holy Spirit constantly works to conform us to the image of Christ, and complete conformity is the end result of the transforming referred to in Romans 12:2. Notes from the NT Recovery Version on Romans 8:29 say this transformation "... includes the changing of our inward essence and nature, and it also includes the changing of our outward form, that we may match the glorified image of Christ, the God-man. He is the prototype and we are the mass production. Both the inward and outward changes in us, the product, are the result of the operation of the law of the Spirit of life in our being."

## 5. He moves us to follow His decrees and to keep His laws.

Ezekiel 36:27 indicates that God's Spirit within us will cause us to walk in His statutes, and keep His judgments. When God gives us His Holy Spirit our lives should begin to change. With some people change occurs immediately, with others change comes slowly. With all of us God continues this transformation process until we die. The degree to which we let Him change us has a direct relationship on the works we do that are evaluated at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:13). Matthew 7:21 says that only those that do the will of God the Father shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Those that receive salvation in Christ but do not go on to renew their minds to do the will of God need to heed this passage of scripture. To refuse God's sanctification is like receiving a present from a greatly honored person but never bothering to open or use the gift inside. It is missing the ultimate purpose of Christ's work on the cross.

1 John 2:29 RV says, *"If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is begotten of him"*. Philippians 2:13 says, *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"*. Righteousness is demonstrated only by those who have the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) within themselves. It is not in us to be righteous without the guidance and

influence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is our mediator at the right hand of God the Father, and He guides the Holy Spirit in helping us desire to do God's will, and to actually do it.

The above discussion answers the question, What did Jesus Christ do for us in His death and resurrection? It does not discuss the the relationship between God and the new believer for the remainder of his life on earth: what we have briefly referred to as sanctification, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

In studying what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross several collateral questions arose that warrant consideration. In the remainder of this chapter we will attempt to provide answers to these questions.

### **How Can Jesus Be Both The Lamb Of God And The Scapegoat?**

Jesus represented both the Passover Lamb without blemish, whose blood was shed to save us from sin, and the scapegoat who took our sins upon Himself and annihilated them forever. However, Jesus' description as the Lamb of God in the NT, seems to conflict with His being our scapegoat in accordance with the OT. When Jesus took our sins upon Himself God viewed Him as a sinner (2 Corinthians 5:21), a scapegoat, thus, He symbolized the scapegoat of the OT. After he took on our sins the Holy Spirit could no longer

reside in His body, which was rendered unclean (Habakkuk 1:13). Darkness cannot exist in the presence of light; thus, when Jesus took on our sins the Holy Spirit could no longer reside within Him. Jesus cried out “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” when the Holy Spirit left Him while He was on the cross. His final utterance was “*It is finished.*” He then bowed His head and gave up His “human” spirit/soul in physical death (John 19:30). He then went (in spirit) to the “*lower parts of the earth*” and preached to the spirits (captives) in Abraham’s Bosom (1 Peter 3:18-19). Jesus “*triumphed*” over Satan and put off principalities and powers from Himself (and believers), and He took the keys of hell and death from him. When Jesus returned to earth in spirit it was very early on Sunday morning and still dark. His spirit/soul rejoined His body at that time, and the Holy Spirit raised Him up in resurrection. Thus, when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb she saw that it was empty so she ran to Peter and John reporting that someone had removed Jesus’ body. In heaven Jesus received His resurrection body by which He was able later that day to appear to the disciples, eat with them, and allow them to touch Him.

Jesus took our sins once and forever, whereas the OT offering of the scapegoat had to be repeated each year for the sins of the Israelites. Christ was the perfect (unblemished by sin) Passover Lamb, who died in our place to



ransom us from Satan, who gained authority over us when Adam *knew* evil. However, we must cast our sins upon Him just as the penitent Israelites sins were cast upon the scapegoat when it was brought before the priest. We do this by repenting, by seeing sin as God sees it, and accepting the fact that Jesus died for our sins. This is vital for sins committed after we have received Christ: we must be repulsed by these sins for we now have Christ (through the Holy Spirit) within us.

As our scapegoat Jesus took our sins and delivered them to the wilderness (Hades) where they are as far from us as the east is from the west. As our sacrificial Lamb He shed His blood, which is placed over our hearts as a sign to Satan that we are under God's protection; we are not "fair game", we are no longer subject to Satan's unrestricted attacks.

### **What About Our Sin Nature?**

We know that our old man was crucified with Christ and we receive a new nature when we are resurrected in Christ. This is what is referred to in the Bible as regeneration: the process of passing from death to life. This is shown symbolically in the ceremony of water baptism: going under the water symbolizes the death of the old nature, coming up out of the water symbolizes our being born again with a new nature. Death is swallowed up in victory.

Receiving this new life is the starting point of a Christian walk. The source of this new life is the *quickened* human spirit, and God gives us His own Holy Spirit as teacher and comforter to guide our quickened human spirit. The regenerated human spirit is perfect, but it needs to be matured. At the moment of our birth in Christ this new life is not full-grown. It is like a fruit newly formed: the life is perfect, but still unripened. The sin nature that was crucified with Christ ruled in our hearts, in our conscience. When we are delivered from this ruling sin nature Jesus' blood cleanses our evil conscience (Hebrews 10:22). This does not make us perfect, it merely makes us innocent, somewhat like Adam when first created. But it does give us the ability to choose that which will make us perfect: His will. We now have power to take authority over lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The Holy Spirit (through our human spirit) can bring us into complete victory over the body and its fleshly lusts. In this process the human spirit becomes more and more like the Holy Spirit, and our hearts become more like Jesus' heart: we are in the process of being conformed to the image of Christ.

Before regeneration the body (actually the id, part of the psyche) of man is in control, and this "self", or old man, rules over the heart, and bodily passions and lusts govern our actions. Our human spirit is dead and cutoff from God;

thus, it cannot provide Godly influence. At regeneration man receives God's own life (the Holy Spirit) into his body, and his human spirit is quickened (made alive) so that it can begin to perform as God intended: by receiving the guidance of God through the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 describes infant Christians who have received Christ but have remained babes, and can only take in the milk of the Word, not solid food. These baby Christians have not allowed the *quickened* spirit to reprogram the mind, and their flesh is still in control: they have not *reckoned* their old man to be dead (Romans 6:11). They will not act on God's guidance to pull down strongholds of lust and pride by "*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Believers must grow in maturity and in the image of Christ by working God's will (received from the Holy Spirit) into their hearts.

## Why Do We Continue To Sin?

We continue to sin because we fail to abide in the guidance of our new nature. We **do not have two ruling** natures, for our old man was crucified when we joined Jesus on the cross, and we received a new nature from God in resurrection: we now have a choice **not** to sin. However, God did not erase all

the memories stored in our mind (biblical heart), nor did He do away with the natural desires and appetites of our bodies. This is the purpose of sanctification; God gives us the ability to take authority over the demands of our body, and the sinful desires of our heart. We no longer are slaves to the old man, but can instead follow the guidance received from the Holy Spirit, and become more like Christ. We are increasingly able to take dominion over fleshly needs and desires.

### **What About The Sins I Commit After Believing?**

This is an issue that causes much confusion in the body of Christ. The book of Hebrews has a lot to say about Jesus' sacrifice being sufficient for all our sins. His sacrifice is not like the priest's sacrifice in the OT that had to be repeated each year. Still, we see other scriptures in the NT like James 5:14-15 that says, *"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."* This scripture seems to strongly encourage members of the body to ask for prayer for sickness, and it implies that we should ask to be forgiven for sins committed. The correct interpretation may be that we need to recognize our sins the way God does (with revulsion), and tell Him how we

feel: we need to repent. James 5:16 goes on to call on members of the body to confess their sins to one another. I believe this passage of scripture should be interpreted: “and if he has committed sins, let him confess these sins to God and the elders, and they shall be forgiven”. There is no new sacrifice required, for Christ has taken care of this once and for all, but God expects us to confess our sins and expose them to the light. 1 John 1:9 says, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

### **What Happens Within Me When My Sins Are Forgiven?**

I believe that this can be understood somewhat through John the baptist’s baptism unto repentance. It was preparatory to baptism in the Holy Spirit, which we receive when we believe *into* Christ. We know that Jesus took our sins in His death on the cross, but John’s baptism seems to represent a recognition and turning away from sin on the part of the penitent, in accordance with God’s view. We know that John’s baptism was preparatory to the baptism of Jesus, and in discussing this with other believers I find that many of them recognize that their sins were forgiven before they had a personal encounter with Christ. In my own life I knew that Jesus had forgiven my sins many years before I actually *knew* Him personally. God seemingly does a preliminary work in our lives to prepare us for a full encounter with Christ

and the Holy Spirit. We discussed earlier how Jesus washed the disciples and made them clean before they received the Holy Spirit. God needs to cleanse us by washing us with the Word before we are ready to receive the Holy Spirit, and join Jesus in His resurrection. In the pattern of the Jewish marriage, after the bride and groom have covenanted the union, one of the preparations that the bride made was to take a purifying bath. The parallelism here is inescapable. When I look back on my life from the time that I became aware that my sins had been forgiven until I actually *knew* Christ, I recognize that God protected me and kept me from doing something really, really stupid: something that might possibly have kept me from fulfilling God's plan for my life. It may be that the forgiveness of my sins was the first step God took in preparing me for a full-blown encounter with Christ.

I realize that every person that God chooses is different, and thus, the methods He uses to bring us to the place He wants us to be are also different. He uses whatever means are necessary to draw us to that place, and the experience of one will not necessarily be that of another.

### **How Does Water Baptism Relate To Jesus' Death?**

The word baptism has two meanings: 1) *burial* of the old man, and 2) *identification* with the resurrected Christ, having Christ in us, and being in

Christ. When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit we have Christ in us.

Romans 8:9 says “*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*”.

Christ enters our bodies in the person of the Holy Spirit, and His principal purpose is to renew our minds, to conform us to His image. This renewal process is referred to in the Bible as *sanctification*, which is defined by Webster as, “to make holy; to make free from sin; purify”. The washing by the Word that God does prepares us for receiving the Holy Spirit. When we are publicly baptized we proclaim to the world (and Satan) that we have been purified by this washing that has led to regeneration, and that our conscience has been cleansed by Christ’s blood. It is not that we are cleansed by the act of baptism itself, but that baptism evinces our cleansing and new nature. If we fail to do this we fail to declare our obedience to Christ in following Him in His baptism (death and resurrection). Jesus often referred to His coming death and resurrection as the baptism that He was *straightened* to accomplish (Luke 12:50). Water baptism witnesses to the fact that we have joined Christ in His baptism, and are now part of His death and resurrection.

## What Is the Difference Between Imputed and Imparted Righteousness?

The word impute is defined by Webster as “to ascribe good or evil to a person as coming from another”. Imputed righteousness is what God freely gives us when we are regenerated: He sees us as being righteous because we are *in Christ*, and not because of anything that we ourselves have done. Christ’s righteousness becomes ours because we are in Him. It is through our human spirit that imputed righteousness becomes imparted righteousness. To quote from William Gurnall’s “The Christian in Complete Armor, Volume II”, “God ordained imputed righteousness to be the basis for our justification and to be also the ground of acceptance of imparted righteousness”. Once this imputed righteousness is recognized by our newly *quicken*ed human spirit, the process of imparting it to the heart begins. To impart means to make known; tell; reveal; or communicate. This is the sanctification process in action. God wants us to get this imputed righteousness from our human spirit, through the soul, and finally imparted (revealed, communicated) to our heart. God works within us both to will, and to do this very thing (Philippians 2:12-13). As we are successful in this we become more and more like Christ. It is the heart that God evaluates when He takes the measure of a man (1 Samuel. 16:7).



As God's imputed righteousness is accepted and is imparted (over time) to our hearts, our mind gets reprogrammed (renewed). We gradually rid ourselves of the vestiges of the old nature left in our heart. We begin to actualize our being *in Christ*: in everything we do and say we try to represent Him. It is His reputation that we are dealing with; He has given us His very self and we must guard it above everything else in our lives.

## The Water and the Blood

*“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood”.*

**1 John 5:6**

Surely, the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5), or washing by the pure water of the Word is one of the most neglected Bible teachings associated with salvation. I have never heard a message on this subject, nor have I found it discussed by expositors of the Word of God in Christian writings and books. This may possibly be explained by the fact that the word “regeneration” is used only two times in the Bible: in Matthew 19:28 Jesus is talking to the disciples about their judging the twelve tribes of Israel in the regeneration when He is sitting on the throne of glory; and in Titus 3:5 Paul refers to the method by which all believers are saved: the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. From this we know that the word “regeneration” can refer to either a state, or to an act. The Greek word “*paliggenesia*”, interpreted by the English word “regeneration”, is defined as “a new birth; regeneration, or

renovation” (“The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised” by Harold Moulton).

There are many other words, and word phrases, used in the Bible to convey the basic meaning of regeneration: new birth, born anew, new creation, as well as others. I believe one reason we find little exposition, and teaching, on the subject of regeneration is the fact that its true meaning is somewhat occluded by the use of other words that convey only partial information. The other important word in Titus 3:5 is “*washing*”, or “*loutron*” in the Greek. The definition of this word is “a bath, water for bathing; a bathing, washing, ablution” (“The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised”, by Moulton). Two other related Greek words will prove important to our discussion here: “*louo*”, interpreted in English as “washed”, meaning to bathe the whole person, and “*nipto*”, interpreted as “wash”, which means to wash only a portion of the body, such as the hands or feet to ceremonially perform ablution.

The goal of this writing is to discuss the meaning of the phrase, “washing of regeneration”, and, in particular, to sort out the purpose and effect of “*washing with pure water*”, and “*sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*”, as they relate to the salvation of sinners.

## **I. Background**

The washing of the body for purification has been ordained by Jewish law for centuries. The OT Book of Leviticus describes the laws relating to uncleanness, and specifies the various methods by which the penitent is restored to ceremonial, and, in some cases moral purity, by washing of the body. Even in ancient Jewish marriages, after the marriage contract had been accepted by the bride, it was common for her to undergo a ritual, or cleansing bath, for purification prior to consummation of the marriage. The Jewish marriage process is highly symbolic of the steps involved in a sinner becoming the bride of Christ. The purification bath is particularly analogous to the process of sanctification described in the NT, whereby the newly born-again Christian is sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water by the Word so that he/she can be presented without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:26-27) prior to consummation of “marriage” to Christ at the time of rapture/resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Another OT practice foreshadowing NT spiritual cleansing was the washing of the priest’s hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle. God directed Moses to make a laver of brass for this purpose, to be placed in the outer court at entrance to the Tabernacle. The Laver was made of copper from looking-

glasses donated by Israelite women for this purpose. The size of the Laver is not known, but it was apparently a pan-shaped vessel large enough for the priest to wash his hands and feet before entering the Holy Place, or offering sacrifices at the Brazen Altar. The Lavers in Solomon's Temple were quite large, since all the sacrifices were washed there before being offered on the Altar. The Lavers constructed by Solomon for the temple were 16 feet in diameter. Priests were required to wash their hands and feet in the Laver before entering the Holy Place, and on the day of Atonement the high priest was required to wash his entire body before entering the Holy of Holies. Since sin cannot enter into the presence of God some temporal spiritual cleansing procedure had to be devised to allow the priest to serve within the Tabernacle. The Brass Laver served this purpose in providing a place wherein the priest could wash with water prior to entering the Tabernacle, thus cleansing himself of sin, albeit only temporarily.

From the above we begin to see how Baptism, introduced in the NT by John the Baptist, is an adaptation of the OT cleansing bath. Baptism is a ceremony symbolizing what has happened within the born-again believer: the old sin nature has died at the cross, and a new Christlike nature has been received. This purification or cleansing is a necessary step for union with

Christ, our bridegroom, for we know the promised Holy Spirit can only reside in a purified temple (body). Ephesians 5:26 says that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church (the bride) by the “*washing of water by the word*”, and verse 27 adds that He continues this up to the time we are presented at the wedding ceremony. From this we know that we must continue to be “*washed by water by the word*” after we receive Christ.

## **II. Washing Of Water By The Word**

I have never heard a sermon, or teaching, on “*washing of water by the Word*” (Ephesians. 5:26), nor on “*the washing of regeneration*”, as it is given in Titus 3:5. I think it is fair to ask, “What happened to this teaching from God?” Granted, it is not discussed at great length, nor is it mentioned a great number of times in the Bible, but the few times it is referred to have such great significance that is difficult to see why, or how, it could have been overlooked. Even great biblical expositors of the past have seemingly ignored, or overlooked this teaching, although some have written on regeneration apart from the “*washing of water by the Word*”. God’s most valuable gems are at times buried in the Bible in such a way that it takes considerable digging to ferret them out: to bring them to the surface for edification and enlightenment. The “*washing of regeneration*” may be one of these great truths. I hope that what I

have gleaned from God's Word on this subject will bring some increased appreciation of this wonderful teaching.

Various scriptures pertinent to this subject are quoted below, followed by analysis of each passage. All scripture references are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.

**I. Ezekiel 36:25-27** - "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

The English word "clean" in this passage interprets the Hebrew word "taher".

"Taher" relates to moral purity, and is defined by Strong's Concordance as being physically sound, clear, unadulterated, uncontaminated; morally innocent, or holy. The "Theological Wordbook of the Old

Testament" (TWOT) by Harris, et al, gives examples of the use of this word in Psalm 51 when David cries out to God after his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity", "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean". We infer that what David is asking for here is ceremonial cleanliness, and moral purity. In Psalm 51:2 David asks to be washed thoroughly from his iniquity and cleansed from his sin, which only the blood of Christ can do.

The Hebrew word “*tum’a*” is interpreted by the English word “*filthiness*” (“impurities” in Ezekiel 36:25 NIV). As used in this scripture it refers to ethical and ceremonial uncleanness; unrelated to spiritual cleanliness or purity. The Hebrew word “*gillul*” is interpreted by the English word “*idols*” in this verse. The Brown, Driver, Briggs (BDB) Hebrew and English Lexicon indicates that this word specifically means logs, blocks, or shapeless things. TWOT gives some synonyms that help in understanding the meaning of this word: “image, thing of shame, thing of horror, empty or meaningless thing, sinful thing, and thing of mystery”.

Ezekiel 36:25 indicates that the first thing that happens to an unbeliever on the path to becoming a believer is that he/she is washed with the water of purification. What we tentatively conclude from the above is that this cleansing seems to be related to impurities, unethical and immoral beliefs, shameful strongholds, empty and meaningless thought processes, bad habits, etc. We know that the washing of verse 25 has nothing to do with our human spirit, nor with our heart because they are dealt with in a different way (see Ezekiel 36:26-27). When we bathe water cleanses our bodies, not our spirit or soul. God surely chose this way of describing the first step on the road to salvation to distinguish it from the changes that follow having to do with the



inner (spiritual) man. The goal of this first step is the purification of our bodies, which will later become a temple of the Holy Spirit as part of the born-again experience (1 Corinthians 6:19).

**2. John 13:8-10** - *“Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.”* This event occurred after the last supper, when Jesus took a towel and a basin of water and began to wash the disciples’ feet. In this passage of scripture Peter objects to the Master humbling Himself in this way. But after Jesus explains that if He does not wash him (Peter) he will have no part with Him, Peter quickly changes his mind. If Peter did not submit to the Master humbling Himself by washing his feet he would never be able to accept Jesus dying on the cross for his sins (see Mark 10:45).

The word we are interested in here is the Greek word *“katharos”*, which is interpreted as the English word *“clean”*. “The Analytical Greek Lexicon” by Harold Moulton gives the definition of this word as “sincere, unfeigned, upright, virtuous, void of evil”, which seems to agree with the OT use of the word *“clean”* in Ezekiel 36:25.

We see that this passage of scripture describes the bodily condition of eleven of the twelve disciples at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. Judas, although he had been privy to the ministry of Jesus throughout the three plus previous years, was not "clean". He had apparently held on to his own version of Jesus' mission on earth. He had "hardened" his heart in acting on his own inclinations and lusts, even to the extent of being accused of being a thief (John 12:6). The other eleven disciples were identified as being "clean" by Jesus, so they were essentially ready to receive the Holy Spirit: only one more thing needed to be accomplished in the disciples' bodies before that momentous event could occur. It is noteworthy that all this transpired before Jesus went to the cross, so we know that the "washing" process is normally initiated before we join Him on the cross in death and resurrection. We recognize from the above that Jesus' preparation of the disciples in this manner was directly in accord with the steps listed in Ezekiel 36:25-27.

There is another wonderful teaching in the action of Jesus' washing of the disciples feet that is mostly overlooked in today's world. Jesus emphasized the importance of the disciples need to remain humble, and to take on the mantle of a servant. This is also encouraged in 1 Peter 5:5, where Peter reminds the brethren that they should be subject, one to another. Another teaching here is

related to the need for continuing this practice. Washing of the feet in this passage is highly symbolic of the need for Christians to seek continued cleansing as we continue on our “walk” through this world. We pick up a lot of “worldly” dirt in our daily lives that can draw us away from abiding in Christ, and becoming conformed to His image (2 Corinthians 3:18). Jesus is encouraging members of His body to be diligent in keeping this dirt washed off our bodies so we remain “clean” and useful in His service. It is significant that members of His body are to support and edify the other members in this way, always maintaining a humble attitude of service.

**3. John 15:3** - *“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you”.*

This verse answers the question, “How did Jesus prepare the disciples for receiving the Holy Spirit?” He fed them on the Word, but He had to administer the Word with power: faith (power) that results in belief. Hebrews 4:2 says, *“For unto us was the gospel preached as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”* These two verses give us vital information about how Jesus goes about preparing those He has chosen for salvation. He starts by ministering the Word so that the penitent becomes clean (sincere, unfeigned, upright, virtuous, void of evil). He then “quickens” their human spirit so they can receive guidance from God through

the Holy Spirit. Finally, He empowers the ministered Word through saving faith, by which the penitent believes unto salvation (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2). The Word can be ministered in many different ways as we will see later on in our discussion.

It was necessary for the disciples to receive a “quickened” (live) human spirit (Ephesians 2:5) because the human spirit received at birth was dead to communication with God as a result of Adam’s sin (Genesis 2:17). Ezekiel 36:26 refers to this as receiving a new spirit which was necessary for the Holy Spirit to minister to the believer’s body.

**4. John 20:22** - *“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost.”* There is disagreement among Christians about this verse, and the purpose of Jesus’ breathing on the disciples. Regarding this verse, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown’s “Commentary on the Whole Bible” states that this act of Jesus amounted to a symbolic conveyance of the earnest of the Holy Spirit, in anticipation of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Vines Expository Dictionary of Bible Words says, “. . . Jesus invokes the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on His disciples in John 20:22 with the words ‘receive the Spirit’, in anticipation of the baptism of the Spirit in Acts 2.” Although it is not stated here, I believe this is when Jesus “quickened” the

human spirit within the disciples, for we know the human spirit must be alive to enable the Holy Spirit's ministry to the body (Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 2:11). In Genesis 2:7, when God breathed into the lifeless body of dust it received a soul, and a human spirit, and became a living creature, whom God named Adam. It was through Adam's spirit that he had communion with God, but he forfeited this when he disobeyed God's command and ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When Adam was told in Genesis 2:17, he would die if he ate of the fruit of this tree, God was referring to spiritual death. When this spiritual death took place the physical body was cut off from its source of life, and it began the slow progression toward death as well. God forms man's spirit which He gives to us while we are still in the womb, and it returns to God at physical death (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zechariah 12:1). Jesus exercised this same creative power when He breathed on the disciples and "quicken" their dead human spirits in anticipation of receiving the Holy Spirit ten days later at Pentecost.

**5. John 3:5 GNT** - *"Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, if not one is generated of water and of Spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God."* Here we deviate from our chronological scripture presentation concerning the disciple's lives to discuss the encounter Jesus had with Nicodemus early in His ministry.

I cite this scripture from the Greek New Testament (GNT) because it uses the word “*generated*” rather than “*born*”, to interpret the Greek word “*gennao*”. This is another one of those scriptures that is interpreted in many different ways. If you consult the GNT it seems pretty obvious that Jesus is referring prophetically to the Word recorded later in Titus 3:5: Christ saves sinners by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. Vincent’s “Word Studies in the New Testament” says that the “*washing of regeneration*” in this scripture refers to cleansing, as performed by the OT priests in the brass laver, which is referred to as the “laver of regeneration”. “The new life is inaugurated both *symbolically* in the baptism with water, and *actually* in the renewing of the Holy Ghost”. For baptism to have significance other than as a “rite” it must be preceded by the “washing of regeneration” by the pure water of the Word.

### **III. Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ**

Above we have restricted our discussion to cleansing, which normally precedes the born-again experience. We have not addressed the need for all who become believers to be forgiven of sin. We can never be reconciled to God until our sins are forgiven, and the Adamic nature within (the sin factory) is replaced by the righteous nature of Christ, imputed to us through Jesus’ death and resurrection. This was the thing Nicodemus did not understand

when he asked Jesus “*How can these things be?*” (John 3:9): he was not prepared to comprehend spiritual rebirth. I would hasten to add that until a person has an encounter with Jesus Christ that leads to a personal relationship, they, like Nicodemus, cannot truly understand the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14).

In our consideration of “washing of regeneration”, and “washing by the pure water of the Word”, we noted that Jesus had “cleansed” the disciples, thus preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We now want to take up the spiritual significance of Jesus’ death on the cross, and His ascension to the Father three days later. First, we need to explain the use of the word “sprinkling” rather than “washed” in discussing the efficacy of Jesus’ blood. While searching the Word I was very surprised to find little scriptural basis for believing that sinners are washed (bathed) in the blood of Jesus. Only two scriptures use the word “washed” in this context: Revelation 1:5 says, “*Unto him that loved us, and washed [loosed] us from our sins in his own blood*”. Many of the oldest Bible manuscripts render Revelation 1:5 as, “*loosed us in [virtue of] His blood*”. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown’s (JFB) “Commentary on the Whole Bible” compares this verse to Matthew 20:28, which refers to Jesus giving His life a ransom for many. The NIV gives this scripture as, “*To him who loves us and*

*has freed us from our sins by his blood . . .*". Old Christian hymns such as "There is a Fountain Filled With Blood", which includes the phrase, "sinners plunged beneath that flood", imply that the entire body is immersed and washed in this fountain. Zechariah 13:1 also says that in the "*day of the Lord*" there will be a fountain opened to the Israelites for sin and uncleanness, which seems to imply bodily washing. The Hebrew word "*maqor*" is interpreted "fountain" in Zechariah 13:1. This Hebrew word consistently refers to flowing **water**, but derivatives of this word can also refer to menstuous blood, or to the flow of blood in child-birth. I see no justification here for assuming this scripture implies that believer's bodies are washed in the blood of Jesus.

Revelation 7:14 GNT says, "*These are the (ones) coming out of the great tribulation; and they washed their robes and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb*".

It is clear from this that believers' robes are "*washed*" in Jesus blood. This is the robe of righteousness, referred to in Isaiah 61:10. Revelation 7:14 implies that believers' robes are "*whitened*" through their own actions. However, since the "whitening" is corollary to the righteousness of a particular life, this must actually refer to holiness manifested by that life during sanctification (the process of making them holy). These works unto holiness are actually works done through the believer's body as the believer subjects his/her will to the will



of the Holy Spirit within. In this way believers are “conformed to the image of Christ” through renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2). The more we become like Christ, the whiter our robe of righteousness will be when we receive it from Him after the rapture. 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 record that every person’s works will be made manifest at the judgment seat of Christ. If any works survive the refiner’s fire, that person will receive a reward.

Scriptures in the KJV (other than those discussed above) invariably describe the application of Jesus’ blood (or the blood of animal’s in the OT), using the word “sprinkled”, or some variant of this word. Deuteronomy 12:23 and Leviticus 17:11 indicate that life is in the blood, and therefore, the Israelites were cautioned against eating (drinking) it. The implication here is that eating or drinking blood can cause the life in the blood to be manifested in some way by the one eating or drinking it. Jesus initiated the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper in Matthew 26:26-28, and clarified its significance in John 6:53-54:

*“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”*

Taking the cup, representing Christ’s blood, is one way in which the believer’s life becomes more like Jesus’ life, but this desirable effect only occurs if this ordinance is celebrated in accordance with God’s direction in 1 Corinthians 11:23-30.

Blood placed on the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites abodes in the OT protected them from the death angel sent to take the life of the firstborn of all Egyptian households. From this we note that blood can be used by God as a sign to protect His chosen ones from evil, even evil that He Himself has ordained, as in this case (Exodus 11:4-6). We also see the symbolic nature of Jesus' blood in the celebration of the Lords supper. In a sense the blood of the cup is like the blood painted on the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites houses in Exodus 12:7: when Satan, or any of his minions, see the (spiritual) blood painted on the doorposts and lintel of the heart they know they have no access to that life.

It is clear from many scriptures in the Bible that God separates us from our sins by Jesus blood shed for us through His death on the cross; and He washes us clean with His written and spoken word, the Logos and Rhema.

**1. John 3:5** - *“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* I do not believe that the mention of water here refers to our physical birth: it would seem to be unnecessary to state that a person must be born physically in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Nor do I believe that this refers primarily to water baptism, which is the outward symbol of a change that has occurred on the inside of a person. John the Baptist's baptism was

unto repentance, which is a necessary step for a person to enter the kingdom of God; but baptism unto repentance must be followed by baptism in the Holy Spirit so that the believer can become holy, and useful in God's purpose on earth (Hebrews 12:14).

**2. Titus 3:5** - *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”*

Among other things, rising out of the water in baptism is symbolic of being washed clean, or purified. Jesus, when speaking to His followers in John 15:3, indicates that they were clean through the Word spoken unto them; and in talking to Peter at the last supper (John 13:10), Jesus stated that they were clean, but not all (speaking of Judas). They were clean from the Word ministered by Jesus, and this cleansing was required before the Holy Spirit could come to reside within them. This cleansing is like pruning a vine, it removes the pollution (dead growth) from sins previously committed through our flesh, but does not remove the guilt of sin within our conscience, which can only be removed by the blood of Jesus Christ. In the NT the flesh of mankind is characterized as vitiated human nature: works of the flesh include sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, magic, and hatred (Galatians 5:17-19). Galatians 5:17 says, *“For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the Spirit*

*against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”* Believers are to live by the Spirit, and not by the flesh.

Unlike cleansing by the blood, cleansing by the water of the Word needs to be continued for the rest of our lives: Ephesians 5:26 says that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church by the washing of water by the Word. Notice that He does this to make (and keep) us holy so that we can be presented to the Father without spot or wrinkle: holy and without blemish. This is Christ’s primary task as Mediator of the new covenant.

Both blood and water flowed from Jesus’ side when the soldier pierced it with a spear after His death on the cross (John 19:34). This is symbolic of what happens to the believer when they join Jesus on the cross, and are resurrected in Him: the blood is shed for our forgiveness, and we are cleansed by the washing of regeneration.

**3. 1 John 5:7-8** - *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”* Speaking of believers, Romans 8:16 says that the Holy Spirit within witnesses with (or through) our human spirit that we are children of God; and thus, we know that we have been adopted by God the Father, and are a member of the family of

God. The continued washing by the pure water of the Word (washing of regeneration) sanctifies us and makes us holy, or more like Christ (Ephesians 5:26). The works the Holy Spirit can do through our bodies bear witness not only to ourselves, but to the world we live in. The blood of Christ shed on the cross removes the stain of sin from our lives, and the sprinkling of His blood within our hearts purges our conscience, and cleans us inwardly so that we can approach the throne of God with boldness (Hebrews 10:22). If we did not have the witness within that our hearts were pure we could not approach God the Father in His throne and could not communicate with Him.

We referred earlier to the purification bath in the Jewish marriage. This was to (symbolically) cleanse the bride, much like Christ does with the church, as described in Ephesians 5:26-27. In the same way, we are to prepare for the return of Christ by continually being washed by the Word and renewed by the Holy Spirit. This cleansing process continues throughout our regeneration and subsequent sanctification (Romans 12:2), until we at death meet Christ, our bridegroom, and our marriage to Him is consummated. If we are not cleansed along the way our interest and love for Christ tend to wane, and we gradually fall away from our first love, Jesus, our Lord and Master (Revelation 2:4-5). When we join Christ on the cross our hearts are sprinkled with His shed blood

and the guilt of past sins in our conscience is washed away completely, forever. This is what happens when we believe into Jesus Christ, but it also foreshadows our continued need for cleansing and forgiveness for the rest of our earthly lives. Jesus taught the disciples this important principle in John 13:14-15, and we should do as Jesus did: not necessarily through the physical act of washing others' feet, but by continuing to love, edify, teach, and provide spiritual guidance and assistance as God equips us (see 1 Corinthians 12; James 5:13-16; 1 Peter 5:5-7; 1 John 1:7-9).

As indicated above, the act of destroying our sins on the cross is portrayed in the OT by the priest sacrificing for the sins of the Israelites. In this ceremony Aaron would lay his hands on the head of the scapegoat and confess the sins of the Israelites, thus (spiritually) placing their sins on the scapegoat's head. The scapegoat was then led away into the wilderness where he was abandoned and left to die. This is symbolic of Jesus bearing the sins of many on the cross (Hebrews 9:28). The sins we have committed in the past are placed on Jesus' head when we come to Him in repentance and, through faith, believe into Him (Romans 3:25). His blood sacrifice was offered once for all time, after which He took His place at the right hand of God the Father to become our Mediator: to insure that none of those God had given Him were

lost (Hebrews 8:6; 13:12). We understand from this that sins committed after believing into Jesus Christ are covered by His sacrifice on the cross. I believe the Bible teaches that believers should deal with sins committed after we have believed as follows: we should confess such sins, repent (turn back in the opposite direction), and regard the sin as God does, with hatred. God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Jesus took our past sins **and** our sin nature in His death on the cross, and He gave us a new (His) nature at resurrection. If our sin nature were not done away with we would continue to sin *willfully*, eventually without remorse, after Christ paid for our sins by His death on the cross. The book of Hebrews describes this perfect work of Christ and states that He obtained “***eternal redemption for us***” by “*entering **once** into the Holy Place*” (emphasis mine). This scripture points out the difference between the work of the OT priests in casting the sins of the Israelites on the head of the scapegoat, and that of Jesus on our behalf at the cross.

#### **IV. Closure**

Washing of water by the Word begins with God the Father drawing us, and ends at our physical death, but the method God uses to bring this about

changes as we mature in our walk. When we join Christ in His death and resurrection we are regenerated (born again), and after we are regenerated the sanctification process must begin (Hebrews 12:14). God, through the Holy Spirit, begins to purify us (make us holy) by the washing by the water of the Word, and renewing our minds (Romans 12:2). We become more like Christ by allowing Him to take over more and more of our lives. We do this by following the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our thoughts and actions, and by spending time in God's presence, talking to Him and listening (praying). If we are to continue to be washed by the pure water of the Word we must spend time studying the Bible, His written Word: allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us more about God, and His wonderful plan for us in His Kingdom. In this process of sanctification, I decrease and He increases.



## Chapter 4

### Holiness (the Sanctification)

*“Speak unto all the congregation of the children  
of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for  
I the Lord your God am holy.”* **Leviticus 19:2**

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness [the  
sanctification], without which no man shall see  
the Lord.”* **Hebrews 12:14**

### Introduction

The Hebrew word interpreted “*sanctify*” in the OT is the word “*qadash*”, which means “be hallowed, holy, sanctified, to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate” (“Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament”, by R. Laird Harris, et. al.). Harris goes on to point out that this word occurs in several dialects of Akkadian with the basic meaning “to be clean, pure, consecrated.” In Canaanite texts the basic meaning is “holy”. Harris concludes that the Hebrew root word “*qdsb*”(qadash) serves to define the sphere of the holy. The Greek word interpreted as “*sanctify*” in the NT is the word “*hagiazō*”, which means to “make holy, sanctify, consecrate” (“Mounce’s Complete Dictionary of Old and

New Testament Words”). Mounce adds that this verb expresses the action of including a person or a thing in the sphere of what is holy. Thus, we see that the Biblical meaning of the word sanctify (or sanctification) as related to the new covenant is the process whereby believers into Jesus Christ are made holy: conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Many scriptures in the Bible attest to the holiness of God. Here are a few examples: Exodus 3:1-6, 15:11; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 99:1-9; Isaiah 6:1-8; Revelation 4:1-11.

The event in the Bible that seems to best depict the great importance and surrounding glory that God attaches to His holiness is documented in the Book of Numbers. Chapters 16 and 17 record an event that occurred during the wanderings of the Israelites, after their exodus from Egypt. Some of the congregation, led by a man named Korah, rebelled against Moses’ and Aaron’s leadership, saying “*Ye take too much on upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?*” These rebels, 250 of which were princes of the tribes that had been given authority to serve within the Tabernacle, considered themselves to be just as holy as Moses and Aaron. The Lord told Moses to have these 250 men to fill their censers with fire from the altar, and be prepared to offer incense before the Lord on the following day: God would then make it clear who was

holy and who was not. When they gathered the next day God was so wroth with the congregation that He was prepared to consume all of them, but Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and pleaded with God, saying, *“shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?”* God apparently relented and Moses then addressed the congregation: *“Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of my own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, ...then the Lord hath not sent me.”* God then destroyed the ringleaders of the rebellion by opening a chasm in the earth that swallowed up all their families, houses, and goods. He then sent fire that consumed the 250 princes that claimed holiness equal to that of Moses and Aaron. The censers of these 250 princes had previously been sanctified by the Lord, so they were used to make covers (plates) for the altar as a reminder to the Israelites that only God can sanctify. They failed to realize that man cannot make himself holy: only God is holy and only He can perform works that are holy through a man’s body.

This passage of scripture gives us some idea as to the importance of holiness to God, and how He guards and protects it against false claims. God has not changed during the 3,000+ years that have passed since this event occurred (Malachi 3:6). He guards and protects his holiness today in the same

way He did in dealing with the Israelites in ~1,500 BC. Believers into Jesus Christ must be extremely sensitive to this, for we have God's holiness within us in the person of the Holy Spirit. Whether God's holiness is manifested through our bodies, or not, is the subject we will pursue in the remainder of this writing.

### **The Pitiful Condition of Mankind**

The sinful condition of unredeemed man is abundantly attested to in the Bible. In Genesis 6:5 God laments that He has created man: "*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" Because of this, God comments a few verses later that He will destroy man from the face of the earth, and this He did in 2348 BC (according to Ussher). God has an absolute and total hatred of sin and evil, for it was introduced by His arch-enemy Satan, wrapped in an enticing package, and sold to Adam through his wife Eve. Satan seemingly knew God's ultimate plan for man from the outset, for he knew just how to frustrate it: get man to regard evil in his heart. It is not exactly clear to me how the flood was going to correct the worldwide corruption of mankind that Satan engineered, since God repopulated the cleansed earth with Noah's family, men from from the old Antediluvian age who supposedly still had a sin nature. However, Noah

was a member of the Sethite (Messianic) line, through which God planned to send His only Son into the world to provide a perfect sacrifice for man's sins so that they could be made holy and acceptable to join Him in eternity.

The flood did not eliminate evil from the world, and that is clearly evident from many scriptures the Bible. To mention just a few, Jeremiah 17:9 states that *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* Psalm 14:2-3 says, *"The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."* Romans 8:7-8 says, *"Because the carnal mind [mind of the flesh] is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So they that are in the flesh cannot please God."* Ephesians 2:2-3 says, *"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation [lived] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* God was not surprised that the flood didn't turn out to be the final solution to the sin problem. Over the following centuries He made several other attempts to draw mankind back from sin. He chose a people (the Israelites) for His own, and gave them godly judges, kings,

priests, and prophets, but they consistently returned to sin. Even when God drew them back through chastisement, they invariably returned to their old ways. 2 Peter 2:22 recognizes this characteristic of mankind: *“The dog is returned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”*

Often, the very leaders God appointed led the way in the worship of other gods, as well as in other sinful acts. Even king David, a man after God’s own heart, committed adultery, and then ordered a murder to cover it up. As good a man as David was, he was drawn away by his own lust which led to sin, and ultimately to death, just as recorded in James 1:15. God knew the only way He could get men to reject worldly pleasures, and instead turn to the love of Christ and be filled with the fulness of God (Ephesians 3:19), was to send His Son into the world to provide a spotless blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of their sins; send His Holy Spirit into the body of man to spread holiness, guidance, and direction; and to appoint the resurrected Christ as mediator of this “new covenant” to insure that those the Father gave Him remained holy to the end of their lives on earth. This is what God the Father set out to do: make a way for the reconciliation of mankind to Himself.

## **God's Corrective Plan**

The steps in God's plan to achieve this goal are discussed in depth in the NT, but the most complete and concise list is given in the OT, in Ezek.

36:25-27 which was discussed earlier. Our purpose in this chapter is to understand sanctification, so we will merely list the steps leading up to it, and focus our discussion on the final step in God's plan of salvation.

- 1.** Those who are to become believers are chosen by God (Psalm 33:12; Matthew 20:16; Mark 13:20; John 15:16; Romans 8:29, 9:13-23; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Revelation 17:14).
- 2.** The Father draws them through the washing of regeneration (Exodus 40:30-32; Proverbs 30:12; Ezekiel 16:8-9, 36:25; John 6:44, 13:10, 15:3; Ephesians 5:26; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22; Revelation 1:5, 7:14).
- 3.** Hearts (consciences) are cleansed of evil and dead works (Deuteronomy 10:16; Ezekiel 38:26; John 12:37-40; Acts 28:27, 7:51; Romans 12:2; Hebrews 3:12-15, 9:14, 10:22)
- 4.** The human spirit is quickened (made alive) in Christ (Psalm 71:20, 119:50; Ezekiel 36:26; John 5:21; 1 Corinthians 15:36, 45; Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13).

5. God's saving faith is given to mix with the Word leading unto belief (John 5:24; Romans 3:26, 4:5, 5:1, 9, 16, 17, 10:9-10; Titus 3:7; Hebrews 4:2; Galatians 2:16, 3:24; Acts 13:39).
6. By joining Christ in death on the cross through repentance the old Adamic (sinful) nature dies (Ezekiel 14:6, 18:30, 36:26; Matthew 3:8, 4:17; Mark 1:4, 6:12; Luke 13:3, 5, 15:7, 10, 18:13-14, 24:27; Romans 2:4; Acts 2:38, 3:19-21, 5:30-31, 17:30, 20:21, 26:20; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; 2 Timothy 2:24-25).
7. The believer is resurrected in Christ a new (born-again) creature, an adopted son of God (John 1:12-13, 3:3-7; Romans 8:15; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:23-26, 4:4-7, 6:15; Ephesians 1:3-6; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23, 25; 1 John 2:29, 3:1, 2, 9, 14). Water baptism is a ceremony celebrating this born-again experience.
8. Baptism in, or receiving, the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:27; John 3:5-6, 14:16-17, 15:26, 16:7; Luke 11:13; Acts 2:4, 10:44; Romans 8:2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 15-16, 23, 26; 1 Corinthians 2:14, 3:16, 6:19, 12:4-12; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Galatians 4:4-7, 5:16-17, 22-23; Colossians 3:10; Titus 3:4-5 ).

## **9. Sanctification of the Body**

Man is a tripartite being, created in God's image: soul, body, and spirit vis-a'-vis God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. God's ultimate purpose in creating mankind was to populate the new heaven and earth with a



holy people, abandoned to their love for Him. The incident in the NT when Jesus was at dinner in the Pharisee's house comes to mind here. Luke 7:37-38, 47 says, *"And, behold, a woman in the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.... Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."* This is the kind of agape love God seeks from those that will join Him in eternity, and this is the kind of love that draws us into the relationship God desires. *"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"* (Galatians 5:14).

We know that no evil can come into God's presence (Habakkuk 1:13), so it seems clear that the body believers receive when resurrected or raptured must be totally free of evil: the body, soul, and spirit that becomes our new identity in the Kingdom of God for eternity must be absolutely, and totally, holy (Ephesians 4:23-24). Even Moses, who had found grace in God's eyes, could not look on God's face, for no man can see Him and live (Exodus 33:20-23). Moses' sin had not been covered by the blood of sacrifice; therefore, he was not free of

sin in God's eyes. In contrast to the human body, man's human spirit and soul owe their existence to the creative power of God alone. According to Hodge's "Systematic Theology" the common doctrine of the church has ever been that the soul of the newborn is not generated or derived from the parents, but is created by the immediate agency of God. He uses no physical processes in their formation. Several scriptures refer to the fact that God made man's spirit: Ecclesiastes 12:7 and Zechariah 12:1 state that God "*gave*" and "*formed*" man's spirit, and Ecclesiastes adds that man's spirit returns to "*God who gave it*" upon physical death. We understand from Matthew 10:28 and Revelation 6:9, that our soul accompanies man's spirit to heaven (or hell) at physical death. Job 34:14 states that God can gather unto himself man's spirit and breath (life/soul). The Bible seems to say that the soul can be separated from the body, but it cannot be separated from the spirit. Vincent's Word Studies in the NT says that Hebrews 4:12 is not to be understood as dividing soul from spirit, or joints from marrow. He points out that the soul and spirit cannot be said to be separated in any sense such as this, and joints and marrow are not in contact with each other. He maintains that the joints and marrow in this scripture should be thought of as representing the joints and marrow of the soul and spirit. In other words, this scripture refers to the Word of God penetrating to

the very depths of the soul and spirit, to sift and analyze thoughts and intents residing within the heart. This seems to accord with Gal. 5:17 in that the spirit is at war with the flesh (heart), and the Word of God penetrates to the depths of the soul and spirit to assist in resolving the resulting skirmishes.

We conclude from the above that the part of regenerated man that cannot enter into God's presence at death is his earthly body, and this is substantiated throughout the Bible, especially in the NT. I believe 1 Corinthians 15:35-50 explains this in language unequaled by any other source. Man's earthly body is placed in the ground at his physical death. This is not the body that "*shall be*", but "*bare grain*": not clothed with spiritual clothing. Just as in the case of a seed planted in the ground, this earthly body must die (decay) so that God can quicken the rudimentary embryo within it at resurrection, and raise the embryo up as a new spiritual body, which will be joined to the soul/spirit that accompanies Christ when He returns in the clouds to gather His elect (Matthew 24:27-31). 1 Corinthians 15:43-44 says, "*It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.*" Verse 49 adds that "*as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*" This heavenly body that we receive upon resurrection (or rapture) would seem to be the "*mansion*" (abode)

promised by Jesus in John 14:2, and referred to in 2 Corinthians 5:2-3: *“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.”* We conclude from this that the spiritual clothes we don at resurrection (rapture) must correspond to the spiritual works done in our earthly bodies after we have believed into Jesus Christ, been born again, received the Holy Spirit, and have entered that phase of our spiritual life referred to in the Bible as sanctification. 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 further supports this conclusion in discussing how these *“works”*, built upon gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble are “proven” by the Lord when we join Him in the clouds. 1 Corinthians 3:11 adds that the only foundation upon which to *“build”* these *“works”* is Jesus Christ. Thus, we know *“works”* that prove to be fireproof must be done at the behest of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the Lord’s plan.

### **The Work of Sanctification**

When Paul was arrested by the Jews and later rescued by the Romans after it was disclosed that he was a Roman citizen, he appeared before king Agrippa in Caesarea. In his own defense Paul summed up his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus: he was to be a minister and witness to the Gentiles *“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan*

*unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*" (Acts 26:18). Oswald Chambers comments on this verse in his "My Utmost for His Highest", says that the words "that they may receive remission of sins" refer to salvation. He further adds that salvation means that we are brought to the place where we are able to receive something from God through Jesus Christ, viz., remission of sins. There follows the second mighty work of grace: "*and inheritance among them which are sanctified.*" "In sanctification the regenerated soul deliberately gives up his right to himself to Jesus Christ, and identifies himself entirely with God's interest in other men."

I recently had the opportunity to speak on the subject of sanctification to two groups of people with widely varying Christian backgrounds. I was surprised, and somewhat taken-aback, by the largely negative response I received. I also had a "sidebar" discussion on sanctification with a men's group I meet with, and detected a little negativity toward this subject from them as well. I confess that I was disappointed, and somewhat confused by the reactions I received which varied from a comment by one attendee that the Bible says, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, and that's all we need to know", to confusion from several others about works done

during the sanctification process vis-a'-vis salvation by faith alone. When I discussed this with my wife she suggested that many Christians harbor negative feelings toward those claiming gifts of the Holy Spirit: they think they are looked-down upon by those with spiritual gifts (see Luke 18:11).

I believe there are three simple points that help us understand confusion about sanctification:

1. Belief “in” Jesus Christ is a necessary but incomplete step in His plan for those His Father has chosen and given to Him (John 17:6-26). Belief “in” Christ must lead to belief “into” Him if we are to become holy (sanctified).
2. We are saved not by works but by faith alone, and that not of ourselves (Ephesians 2:8). After we are saved, the works accomplished in our bodies must be proven as to what sort they are: whether they are built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:13-15).
3. Gifts of the Holy Spirit are gifts from God, and nothing (including the attitude of others) must keep us from wanting more of Him in our lives.

One possible difficulty is that the new convert may not have received the Holy Spirit: his/her belief is “in Christ” and not “into Him”. Ezekiel 36:27, as well as many other scriptures, records the fact that God will give believers His Spirit (the Holy Spirit): the Comforter Jesus promised to send after He went to

the Father (John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7). Acts 2:38 states that those who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins will receive the Holy Spirit, but we know from several cases in the Book of Acts, that these events do not necessarily happen concurrently (see Acts 8:14-17). Many believers that I have questioned about this attest to the same experience: they received the Holy Spirit some time after they believed. One instance is recorded in which a group of Gentiles received the Holy Spirit while Peter was yet witnessing to them. Acts 10:44 records that “*While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word*”. Cornelius and those that were gathered with him began to magnify God and speak with other tongues before they were baptized in the name of Jesus. In talking to many people about the salvation experience in their lives nearly all attest to a period of some time between recognizing Jesus as Savior, and receiving baptism in the Holy Spirit. My own experience further validates this: I believed and was baptized in name of Jesus Christ as a teenager. I did not receive the Holy Spirit until I was 33 years old, when I had a personal encounter with the Lord. In my case it was “believing in Jesus Christ” initially, and “believing **into** Jesus Christ” later. As mentioned earlier believing “into” the Lord is not the same as believing “in” Him (John 6:30). My experience would argue that when one believes into Jesus

Christ they receive the Holy Spirit. For those that have truly believed, repented, and been baptized in Jesus' name, but have not received the Holy Spirit, God promises to give it to them if they will ask (Luke 11:13).

Some clarifying remarks are in order here about receiving, or being baptized, in (or by) the Holy Spirit. In John 14:17 Jesus described the Holy Spirit as “*dwelling with*” the disciples but “*being in*” them later. I believe this describes the condition of believers who are first drawn by the Father via the working of the Holy Spirit “*dwelling with*” them, and later, “*being in*” them after they have received the Holy Spirit. I believe the Bible makes it clear that we do not receive the Holy Spirit in part. In other words, when you receive the Holy Spirit you receive the third person of the trinity in His entirety, not piecemeal. He comes with all His attributes intact: all the fruits (Galatians 5:22-23), and gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28) are in Him. However, this does not mean that all these fruits and gifts will be manifested immediately in the life of the one to whom He comes. The fruit(s) you bear and the gift(s) you manifest are a direct function of how thoroughly you are “purged” (1 Corinthians 5:7, Proverbs 16:6), and how firmly you are attached to the vine (Jesus Christ), from whom we receive our nourishment (John 15:4-5). The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to edify the body of Christ, and God



selects the gift to be manifested based on the readiness of the vessel (body member), and the need of the church body (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-12).

John Owen, in his book entitled: “The Holy Spirit”, lists three reasons why growth in holiness is often neglected: a) believers presume they are already perfect and have no need for further evangelical obedience, b) believers assume they are in a state of grace and therefore need not be concerned about becoming holy and obedient in all things (see Romans 6:1-2), and c) weariness, despair, and depression arising from opposition to the work of holiness.

Although Owen wrote during the seventeenth century, the reasons he gives apply to many in our own day; however, from a twentieth century point-of-view I would argue that another great impediment to understanding and acceptance of the discipline of sanctification is a lack of preaching and teaching on this vital subject. I do not remember ever hearing a sermon, or teaching, on this subject before my personal encounter with the Lord in 1963.

Thus, I was ill-prepared to let the Lord sanctify me: I was not even acquainted with the sanctifier: the Holy Spirit. Sadly, I do not see a big change in this situation even today. There has been an explosion of sorts in the proliferation of non-denominational charismatic church bodies, including great emphasis on

the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit, but in my experience in association with several of these in different cities in Texas and New Mexico has not been encouraging in regard to preaching and teaching the discipline of sanctification. 2 Timothy 4:3 GNT says, *“For a time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own lusts, they will heap up to themselves teachers, tickling the ear; and they will turn away the ear from the truth and will be turned aside to myths.”* We seem to be a society that refuses to hear, and accept, the hard teachings in God’s Word characteristic of the great preachers of the past. We need only to remember the scripture in Hebrews 12:14: *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness (the sanctification), without which no man shall see the Lord.”*

This brings us back to the process of sanctification, and what happens in the believer’s life after he/she has believed into Jesus Christ. The understanding I get from the Bible on the subject of sanctification is that it is directly related to the “purging” referred to above. Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26(b) gives us one of the first clues we get on this subject: both scriptures refer to taking away our *“stony heart”* and replacing it with a heart of *“flesh”*. Other places in the Bible refer to individuals hardening their hearts, or having them hardened by God (Exodus 7:13, 8:15; 2 Chronicles 36:13; Job 9:4; Isaiah 63:17; Daniel 5:20; Mark 8:17; Hebrews 3:13). The sacrificial system in the OT was established by

God so that priests could be “sanctified” by washing with water and sprinkling of blood before coming into His presence in the tabernacle: their sins and the evil condition of their hearts had to be “covered” by the blood of sacrifice. Even the sacrifices brought by penitents seems symbolic of sanctification: the blood of the sacrifice proved that there was a death of something dear given to cover the sin of their heart. Mark 16:14 records the fact that it was unbelief, and hardness of hearts that kept the disciples from believing that Jesus had risen. Romans 2:5 refers to hardness and impenitent hearts that treasure up wrath against the day of judgment. God loves those with a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17), and Isaiah 57:15 says that God revives the heart of the contrite ones. I believe this is what sanctification is all about, reviving hearts: “to bring (hearts) back to a healthy, vigorous, or flourishing condition after a decline” (Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language). The way God chose to accomplish this is through sanctification, renewing our minds (part of the Biblical heart), and He does this by removing the “hard” and “stony” places out of our hearts. These “hard” and “stony” places represent the thoughts and memories stored in our minds before becoming believers, as well as the thoughts and memories still within us derived from the lust of our eyes, lust of our flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Thus, sanctification is in

reality the emptying of ourselves of all these things which impede the Holy Spirit's working through us to achieve Christ's plan for our lives, and to use our purged vessel to "*...preach the gospel to the poor, heal the broken-hearted, preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord*" (Luke 4:18-19). These are the works referred to in 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, that will be tested by the refiner's fire to see if they are works of the Holy Spirit, or merely the works of man.

In Oswald Chamber's "My Utmost for His Highest" comments on 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 says that "Sanctification means being made one with Jesus so that the disposition that ruled Him will rule us. Are we prepared for what it will cost? It will cost us everything that is not of God in us." On Hebrews 12:5, he says, "Sanctification is not my idea of what I want God to do for me; sanctification is God's idea of what He wants to do for me, and to get me into the attitude of mind and spirit where at any cost I will let Him sanctify me wholly." And on 2 Corinthians 10:5, "It is only when God has altered our disposition and we have entered into the experience of sanctification that the fight begins. The warfare is not against sin; we can never fight against sin; Jesus Christ deals with sin in Redemption. The conflict is along the line of turning our natural life into a spiritual life, and this is never

done easily, nor does God intend it to be done easily. It is done only by a series of moral choices. God does not make us holy in the sense of character; He makes us holy in the sense of innocence, and we have to turn that innocence into moral character by a series of moral choices. These choices are continually in antagonism to the entrenchments of our natural life, the things that erect themselves as ramparts against the knowledge of God. We can either go back and make ourselves of no account in the Kingdom of God, or we can determinedly demolish these things and let Jesus bring another son to glory.”

I believe that a good way to bring this to a close is to provide a list of important scriptures related to sanctification in the hope that readers will be interested enough to study and seriously consider the things God has given us about this great work He wants to do through and in us.

**1.** In Jesus’ great prayer before going to His death He asked the Father to sanctify those that were given to Him (John 17:17).

**2.** 1 Corinthians 1:30 says that because we are in Christ we have the wisdom of God: righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

- 3.** Sanctification concerns redemption of the body, and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 says that because we are sanctified we must abstain from fornication: a sin against the entire body.
- 4.** 2 Thessalonians 2:13 says that God chose us from the beginning through sanctification by the Holy Spirit.
- 5.** 1 Peter 1:2 states that the elect are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by sanctification of the Spirit, and obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.
- 6.** 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 is Paul's prayer for Christians that the God of peace would sanctify them completely.
- 7.** 2 Corinthians 3:18 says that we are changed into His image (are sanctified) from one glory to a greater glory.
- 8.** Ephesians 4:23-24 says that we are renewed in our mind and put on the new man (sanctified) in righteousness and true holiness.
- 9.** God has promised to sanctify us, to work His holiness in us; He does not leave us to do it by our own ability and power (Jeremiah 31:33, 32:39-40; Ezekiel 36:26-27).

**10.** It is the Holy Spirit that sanctifies all believers, and who produces holiness (Psalm 51:10-12; Ezekiel 11:19; Romans 8:9-14; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Peter 1:2; Titus 3:4-5).

**11.** Regeneration is one creative and instantaneous act; whereas sanctification is progressive. It begins after regeneration and continues until physical death (John 3:3, 5; Colossians 2:19; Philippians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Titus 3:5; 2 Peter 3:17-18).

**12.** The Holy Spirit does the work of holiness by strengthening His graces in us (Ephesians 3:16-17; Colossians 1:10-11; Isaiah 40:29; Psalm 138:8).

**13.** Paul encourages us to press on toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12-14).

**14.** Only those that believe into the Lord Jesus Christ, and in God the Father through Him are sanctified (John 17:17, 19-20, 7:38-39; 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 5:23).

**15.** We receive our promised inheritance by being sanctified through the faith of Jesus Christ working within (Acts 26:18).

**16.** Hebrews 12:14 states that holiness (sanctification) is required for a man to enter into the immediate presence of the Lord.

**17.** We are to serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives (Luke 1:75).

**18.** It is the Holy Spirit's holiness within us that is manifested in our acts of ministry (Acts 3:12).

**19.** We are to render the members of our body servants to righteousness unto holiness (Romans 6:19).

**20.** The fruit of the Spirit manifested in our lives grows as we become more holy and sanctified (Romans 6:22).

**21.** We are to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit in holiness through the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1).

**22.** Through love the Lord establishes our hearts unblameable in holiness before God the Father (1 Thessalonians 3:13).

**23.** God chastises those He loves for their profit, that they can become partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10).



## Jesus Christ: Intercessor and Mediator

**Intercede:** To stand in the gap between God and man in prayer.

**Mediate:** An intermediary or conciliator between God and man.

I recently confronted the question: “What is Jesus Christ doing while He is at the right hand of the Father in heaven?” I had previously been under the impression that He was there to plead our case to the Father when we were asking for something in prayer. This was probably due to my remembering John 16:23, which says, *“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you”*. In other words, I thought that Jesus Christ was at the right hand of the Father to consult with Him about our prayers being answered. As I studied what the Word of God had to say about this I began to get a much bigger picture of what Christ actually does for us as He stands, or sits, at the Father’s right hand. John Owen’s book entitled: “Communion With God,” really opened my eyes to what I believe is truly our Lord’s role as intercessor and mediator: jealous guardianship and oversight of those the Father has given Him. In this chapter I hope to be able to describe what this oversight entails.

We need to start by reviewing what God's Word says about Christ's role as intercessor and mediator. The word "intercessor" is used only one time in the KJV of the OT. Isaiah 59:16 says, *"And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him."* This passage describes the condition of Israel as God looked and saw there was no man to intervene (or intercede) for the people. The verb form of the Hebrew word interpreted as intercessor here is better interpreted as "interpose": to place or put between. Since there was no man worthy enough to intercede, He resolved to send the Redeemer to intercede and turn them from transgression. Another OT scripture that is helpful in understanding intercession is Ezekiel 22:30: *"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none"*. It is clear from these scriptures that God the Father looks for intercessors to reason with Him in regard to contemplated action. The word "intercession" is used four times in the KJV of the OT. In all cases the identical Hebrew word (root) is used meaning a request, or entreaty. Intercession is used five times in the KJV of the NT. In all applications the same Greek word (root) meaning "to light upon, fall in with, intercede (with or for), and entreat" is used.

The word “mediator” is not used in the KJV of the OT, but is used seven times in the NT, all translations of the same Greek word. The uses of this word are all clearly references to Jesus Christ, except for Galations 3:19, which refers to Moses standing between God and the Israelites at Mt. Sinai when the law was given. From the definition of mediate given above we recognize that Moses was an intermediary between God and the Israelites, for the Israelites were afraid “*by reason of the fire.*” I believe the Israelites had good reason to be afraid, for we know that no evil, nor any iniquity can come into the presence of God Almighty (Habakkuk 1:13). Three of the seven uses of this Greek word in the NT relate to Christ’s role as mediator of the new covenant (or testament). Hebrews 9:15-18 makes an interesting point: “*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament [covenant], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which were called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither [even] the first testament [covenant] was [hath not been] dedicated without blood.*” This passage of scripture says that Jesus Christ’s work as mediator of the new covenant began at His death, and the purpose or goal of His efforts as mediator is to cause

those that are called (elected) to receive eternal inheritance (life). Thus, we see that Christ's role as mediator is to act as our advocate to the Father, representing us in all things related to receiving our eternal inheritance. When this soaked into my understanding I began to realize that my previous ideas about what Christ was doing at the right hand of the Father were incomplete: there is more going on here than I had thought. In some way I had developed the idea that when Jesus suffered death on the cross, was resurrected, and ascended to heaven, that His work in bringing those the Father had given Him to heaven was essentially completed. I thought that His role in heaven as intercessor was to decide how best (for our ultimate good) to answer our prayers, get the Father's concurrence, and put the answer into action. I also had a vague impression that Christ had some involvement with the Holy Spirit in renewing our minds and conforming us to His image: possibly deciding on corrective action when we misstep. I did not grasp the fact that His active management and oversight did not end until those the Father gave Him were with Him for eternity: first in heaven, then back on earth during the millennium, and finally in the new Jerusalem, where they reside for eternity. Our betrothal to Jesus Christ is consummated when we meet Him in heaven, and He delivers us to the Father as His bride, but the work of conforming us to

His image is finished at our physical death. The works the Holy Spirit has accomplished using our vessels (bodies) are finished when we die, and these works are the building materials for the immortal bodies Christ gives us when we join Him in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4; Revelation 19:8).

To return to Jesus Christ's role as mediator of the new covenant we need to examine what the new covenant actually is. The changes that occur in a person's life when he/she enters the new covenant have been documented earlier. Ezekiel 36:25-27, 29 describes the changes that occur. The final change given here states that He causes us to walk in His statutes and to keep his judgments. It is this last mediation task that I want to focus on: the renewal of our minds, or sanctification.

The biblical definition of sanctification is to separate, or set apart for God: to separate from sin, make holy. When believers receive the Holy Spirit God sets them apart: He separates them unto Himself. Although He sees us as sanctified at this point, His plan is to bring us to the place where our body (biblical heart) is actually holy and sanctified, conformed to the image of Christ. The process of sanctification in our bodies does not begin until we receive the Holy Spirit, for He is the One God uses to bring about this change:

conforming us to the image of Christ by making us holy (2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). He does this by providing godly wisdom and guidance so that we can choose to believe and act as God wants us to, or we can reject God's guidance and continue to act as we did when we were disobedient (Ro. 6:19). The works of the Holy Spirit in man are described in many scriptures, some are listed below:

- 1.** As comforter He provides hope, encouragement, and alleviation of grief.
- 2.** As sanctifier He renews our minds and conforms us to the image of Christ.
- 3.** He witnesses with our human spirit that we are sons of God.
- 4.** He gives us understanding of the Word of God.
- 5.** He knows the mind of God, thus we have access to the mind of God through Him.
- 6.** He sets us free from the law of sin and death.
- 7.** He gives us power to be witnesses for Christ.
- 8.** He provides fruit of the Spirit that believers will bear if we let Him rule our lives.
- 9.** He brings to remembrance the teachings of Christ.
- 10.** He guides us in prayer, worship, and praise.
- 11.** He is the source of spiritual gifts such as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

This is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak, for it is very difficult to change old habits and give up strong feelings of lust and pride: to die to ourselves. But this is what is required if we are to become like Jesus: He has the right to do whatever it takes to prepare our bodies for immortality, to spend eternity with Him. This is what the goal (Paul calls it the prize) of sanctification really is: to present us holy, without blemish, and unproveable before Him, so that we will be among the sanctified who receive inheritance from God (Acts 26:18, 20:32; 2 Timothy 2:21). Christ brings this about through His role as mediator of the new covenant.

For a child to be educated in our public schools he needs a good teacher as well as a true source of knowledge (or wisdom). In the sanctification process we have the very Spirit of God and Christ within us as our teacher, and a source of wisdom beyond comprehension, for the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God. But just as a child needs an appropriate environment conducive to learning, we need a spiritual protector (or mentor) to insure that we make it “home” with a full knapsack of works recorded in our name that have survived the refiner’s fire (1 Corinthians 3:13-15). This is the part of Christ’s work at the right hand of the Father that I had failed to see. God the Father looks to Jesus Christ to bring those that He has given Him home safely; and that means to

our home in heaven after physical death, for eternity. He does this out of His great love for the saints, for whom He died on the cross, and now continues to care for while at the right hand of the Father. *“Christ shows and proves his love to his saints in richly providing for all their needs”* (John 1:16 NKJV). Christ sheds abundant grace over His saints, for He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). He has given us wisdom and prudence and made known unto us the mystery of His will, so that in the fullness of time He can gather all things unto Himself (Ephesians 1:8-10). I like what Webster’s Dictionary says about grace: “divine influence in man to make him pure and morally strong”. It is this divine influence that our Mediator Jesus Christ provides for us through the Holy Spirit.

Some of the ways that Christ as Mediator cares for his saints are listed below (see “Communion With God, pg. 112).

1. He strengthens us against the sin that assaults us by strengthening and fortifying our hearts. He then tests our strength by allowing Satan to bring temptation.
2. He sometimes removes the temptation entirely when it grows so strong and violent that we do not know what to do (2 Peter 2:9). He



sometimes gives more grace as temptations (trials) grow and continue to increase (2 Corinthians 12:9).

3. He gives wisdom to make a right, holy, and spiritual use of all temptations (James 1:2). Peter tells us that it is sometimes necessary to be left in temptations (1 Peter 1:6).
4. He supports us with mercy and pardon when at any time we are overcome by temptation so that we will not sink utterly under the burden.
5. He shows compassion for us in all our afflictions (Isaiah 63:9, Colossians 1:24). His compassion is revealed in two ways: He intercedes with His Father (Zechariah 1:12), and He avenges His elect on those who cause them to suffer (Luke 18:7, 2 Thessalonians 1:6).
6. He has a plan for the believer's life, and He tries to keep us on the right track to fulfill that plan. To do this He opens some doors and closes others. We must learn to recognize and pass through the open doors, and turn back from those that are closed.
7. He is constantly nurturing us through training and discipline to make us more like Himself. When we are victorious over our lusts

and pride the Holy Spirit can manifest Christ through our bodies.

In all this effort He seeks our ultimate good.

When God begins to make us holy our lives begin to get difficult.

God is removing the last vestiges of evil from our hearts and it is difficult to change old habits and give up strong feelings of lust and pride: to die to ourselves. But this is what is required if we are to become like Jesus, and live a life of crucifixion and humility. Great demands of obedience, that may seem onerous and burdensome, will be required, but it is His right to expect us to be obedient if we truly belong to Him. He has the right to do whatever it takes to prepare our bodies for immortality, to spend eternity with Him. Are we really prepared for what that will cost? As Oswald Chambers says "it will cost us absolutely everything in us that is not of God." This is what the goal of sanctification really is: to present us holy, without blemish, and unrepentable before Him, so that we will be among the sanctified who receive inheritance from God (Acts 26:18, 20:32).

**Conclusion:** Jesus Christ is both mediator and intercessor to those the Father has given Him. His work in bringing believers "home" to the Father in heaven does not end until we are safely there and are in His

arms as His pure bride. We then receive the inheritance promised:  
eternal life!

## **A Chronology of Salvation**

It seems appropriate to close this book by providing a chronology of salvation: a list of the events in a believer's life that lead him/her in the "Way of the Cross". We will start by defining what we mean by the word "salvation". I believe salvation can best be defined as "the spiritual and eternal life given by God to those who believe "into" the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is defined by Lewis Sperry Chafer in his book entitled: "Major Bible Themes", as "the whole work of God by which He rescues man from the eternal ruin and doom of sin and bestows on him the riches of His grace, including eternal life now and eternal glory in heaven".

The chronology outlined below begins with the very first reference to (future) believers in the Bible, and ends with their arrival in the new heaven and earth. Some repetition is necessary in describing these steps.

### **I. The Elect Are Chosen**

God chose those who would become His children before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5), and He wrote their names in the Lamb's Book of Life (Philippians 4:3, Revelation 21:27).

## **2. The Ministering of Angels**

God sends out ministering angels to “*do service*” for those that will be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14, Matthew 18:10). This possibly refers to God’s protection of those He has chosen to insure they will not be overwhelmed by evil before they become mature believers. The GNT says that these angels are sent out “*because of the ones being about to inherit salvation*”.

## **3. The Father Draws Those He Gives To Christ**

At the appropriate time God initiates the drawing process in the (future) believer’s life (John 6:44). This happens in many different ways but is always what God sees as being necessary to get the person to “come to himself” (Luke 15:17).

## **4. The Washing Process Begins**

Once God has gotten the (future) believer’s attention He starts the “washing” process. This is the first step in the five steps listed in Ezekiel 36:25-29 describing what happens in the life of person as he becomes a believer into Jesus Christ. This “washing” was referred to by Jesus at the Last Supper as He prepared to wash the disciples feet prior to leaving for the Garden of

Gethsemane. John 13:10 describes what Jesus told them: “*ye are clean, but not all.*” (referring to Judas). He further clarified this in John 15:3, by adding that they were “*clean through the word which I have spoken unto you*”. This “washing” process is also referred to as “*the washing of regeneration*” in Titus 3:5. The Greek word interpreted “clean” in these passages is defined as “sincere, unfeigned, upright, virtuous, and void of evil” (“Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised”, by Moulton). This is the condition that Jesus gets us to in readiness to receive Him as Savior.

## **5. Hearts Are Changed and Sins Are Forgiven**

As we begin to get our lives cleansed by the Word of God we also begin to loosen our hold on some of the hard places in our hearts (actually the mind). This is recorded in Ezekiel 36:26, where God says He will give us a new heart, and will take the stony heart out of our flesh. The stony places in our hearts are the worldly beliefs we have stored in our brains, the things that keep us from receiving the Word, and mixing it with the saving faith necessary to believe into Christ (Hebrews 4:2). God does some reprogramming within our hearts at this time, for He is preparing us to receive guidance from the Holy Spirit. We are washed by the pure water of the Word to make us “clean”, but it is the blood of Jesus Christ that justifies us in the Father’s eyes, purges our

conscience from dead works (Hebrews 9:14), and remits our past sins (Romans 3:25). The only sacrifice acceptable to God the Father for the sins of man is the sinless life of the perfect Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. His blood was poured out for our sins.

It is at this point that many come to believe in Christ, repent of their sins, accept the fact that God has forgiven them, and feel that they are Christians in every sense of the word. Romans 10:17 talks about the faith required for salvation, which comes by hearing the spoken Word of God and Heb. 4:2 adds that this faith is the power unto belief. The emphasis here is on “belief,” as contrasted to “faith”. It is clear from these verses that the Bible is referring to belief unto salvation, that comes from hearing the spoken Word of God and mixing it with “saving faith”. This faith is a gift of God (Romans 12:3), and not all men have it (2 Thessalonians 3:2). Thus, we note that when the unbeliever hears the Word of God, and mixes it with the faith God provides to engender belief, he/she takes the first major step in becoming a believer into Jesus Christ.

At this point we avail ourselves of the blood of Jesus, shed for us on the cross. The blood of Jesus accomplished two things for us: it provided

forgiveness for our past sins, and it cleansed our conscience of the guilt associated with these sins (Romans 3:25, Hebrews 10:22).

## **6. The Human Spirit is “Quickened”**

Ezekiel 36:26 also says that we receive a “*new spirit*”. This is referred to in the NT as a “quickened spirit”. The human spirit in unregenerate man is dead to God as a result of Adam’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:17, Romans 5:12), but God quickens our spirit at the appropriate time (Ephesians 2:1). It is through our human spirit that we communicate with God (Job 32:6, Romans 8:16), so God does the things within us that are necessary for us to receive His nurturing and guidance through the Holy Spirit that will ultimately be given to us. Our human spirit receives information from the Holy Spirit whereby we renew our minds (Romans 12:2). I believe the disciples’ spirits were quickened when Jesus appeared to them after His resurrection, when they were gathered together in hiding for fear of the Jewish hierarchy. John 20:22 says that Jesus “*breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost...*”. I see a similarity between this and God breathing into Adam when he became a “*living soul*” (Genesis 2:7). It was necessary that the disciples’ human spirits be “quickened” before they received baptism in the Holy Spirit on the Day of



Pentecost, seven weeks later. When Jesus breathed on them He gave them assurance (earnest, or pledge) that they would receive the Holy Spirit.

7. Before God, in the form of the third person of the Trinity, enters our bodies, the old (sin) nature that held us in its grip must flee, for no evil nor sin can exist in God's presence (Romans 6:4-6). Romans 6:6-7 says "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [done away], that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead [hath died] is freed [justified] from sin.*" 1 Corinthians 1:30 says, "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*" When we are born again (spiritually), we become part of Christ's body, we are "*in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:1-20): we have joined Christ in the death of our sinful (fleshly) nature on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:14). This is also described in Hebrews 10:9-10, 17-22, where Jesus says that He came to take away the first (old) covenant, that He might establish the second (new): He takes away our old sinful life and establishes us in a new spirit-led life: He takes our sin nature, thus, we are no longer a slave to sin: we are born again, a new creature. This is described in Romans 8:15 as an act of adoption: "*...ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*". We are no longer citizens of this world, subject to Satan's influence and direction, but are now citizens of the Kingdom

of God, and sons of God the Father, with all the authority, rights and privileges vested in sonship. When we identify ourselves as Christians we fully accept the fact that Jesus took the old “us” to death on the cross, and created us anew as spiritual beings: adoptees of His Father in heaven.

## **8. The Holy Spirit is Given**

Ezekiel 36:27 records the fact that God will give believers His Spirit (the Holy Spirit): the Comforter Jesus promised to send after He went to the Father (John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7, Luke 11:13, Romans 8:15, 26, Acts 1:3). Receiving the Holy Spirit (or baptism in the Holy Spirit), does not always occur at the same time our human spirit is quickened, nor even when we accept the fact that Jesus bled and died on the cross for our sins. In fact, the Book of Acts records instances when people who had been baptized in the name of the Lord did not receive the Holy Spirit until sometime later when Peter and John laid their hands on them (Acts 8:14-17). In talking to many people about the salvation experience in their lives nearly all attest to a period of some time between recognizing Jesus as Savior, and receiving baptism in the Holy Spirit.

We noted earlier that the Bible makes it clear that we do not receive the Holy Spirit in part: when you receive the Holy Spirit you receive the third person of the trinity in His entirety, not piecemeal. He comes with all His

attributes intact: all the fruits (Galatians 5:22-23), and gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28) are in Him. However, this does not mean that all these fruits and gifts will be manifested immediately in the life of the one to whom He comes. The fruit you bear is a direct function of how thoroughly you are “purged” (1 Corinthians 5:7, Proverbs 16:6), and how firmly you are attached to the vine (Jesus Christ), from whom we receive our nourishment (John 15:4-5). The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to edify the body of Christ, and God selects the gift that will be manifested based on the readiness of the vessel (body member), and the need of the church body (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-12).

In regard to evidence that we have received the Holy Spirit, I know of at least three things that changed dramatically when I received the Holy Spirit: I realized for the first time in my life I was a son of God (Romans 8:16); I was now able to talk to God and know that He was there listening and waiting to give me answers and guidance; and my life began to change, for I immediately saw a change in my priorities and goals. When I encountered the Lord personally, I was one of many that began to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At that time (1963), the generally accepted evidence of one having received baptism in the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues, and I and many

others gathered around teachers who reportedly could assist in receiving and manifesting this gift. I was not successful in that endeavor, but later, God, with wisdom that only He possesses, opened my mouth in this way while I was in personal prayer. As the years have passed I have come to realize that this is only one the many attributes of the Holy Spirit that He brings with Him wherever He goes. Anyone that has received the Holy Spirit has the capability within (from the Holy spirit), to pray in this way in their prayer time, and when we do not know how to pray about a certain situation, I think it is extremely helpful. After all, the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:12), and this is what we are trying to determine: what is God's will in a particular situation, and how (or will) He use me as a vessel to bring closure. Praying in tongues in this manner is not the gift of tongues mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10, which refers to prophecy in tongues that requires an interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:5).

## **9. Baptism**

Water Baptism differs from the changes in the believer's life outlined above since it is only an acknowledgment of things that have happened during the process of believing "into" Jesus Christ, and joining Him in death, burial, and resurrection. This is not to diminish the importance of Baptism, for Jesus has

ordained it: *“Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”* (Matthew 28:19).

When a believer is baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost [Spirit] they are identified with, and belong to the triune Godhead. Colossians 2:11-12 NLT says, *“When you came to Christ, you were ‘circumcised,’ but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure - the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.”* Romans 6:3-4 adds *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

Water Baptism is an act of obedience on the part of the believer. It should follow the believer's repentance for the sins in their past life, recognition that that part of their life is now “washed away”, and that they are now a new creature “in Christ”. Baptism is a testimony to the world (including Satan), that we are identified with the Lord and He is identified with us. I think Jesus ordained water baptism as a public testimony so that a new believer could clearly identify the fact that he was no longer the same person he had been,

and that his life was under “new management”: he was committed to becoming Christlike (holy).

## **10. Sanctification**

The new believer (baby Christian) is now ready to begin a painful, but blessed part of the salvation process. Ezekiel 36:27 describes this as walking in His statutes and keeping His judgments. Sanctification involves the renewing of our minds, that we may become conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29; 12:1-2). In completing the above steps (1 through 9) in the process of salvation we are now prepared to enter that phase of development in which God teaches, guides, and uses us to achieve His purposes on earth.

This is by no means the end of our spiritual journey to salvation, and is in many ways only the beginning; for this is the point where we become identified as one of the members of Christ’s body, responsible for carrying on His work on earth. From this we see the need to be a part of the Body of Christ on earth, for it is through this mystical body on earth that God now works to bring all things to completion (see Ephesians 5:22-33).

“The New Strong’s Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words” defines sanctification as “(1) separation to God (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2), (2) the resultant state, the conduct befitting those so separated

(1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4, 7), (3) it is translated ‘holiness’ in Romans 6:19, 22; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 12:14), (4) sanctification is thus the state predetermined by God for believers, into which in grace He calls them, and in which they begin their Christian course and so pursue it.” The Greek root word for sanctification is “*hagios*”, which is interpreted as sacred, pure, blameless, religious, and consecrated. Thus, believers undergoing sanctification are referred to as “saints” in the NT. God’s intent throughout this process is to bring us into sanctification. In some ways water Baptism is a commitment on the part of the new believer to enter into sanctification, and, in so far as it is possible, conform our minds and bodies to the likeness of Christ.

## **II. Rapture/Resurrection**

All believers who have died “in Christ” will be resurrected, and those still alive will be “raptured” when the Lord comes back in the clouds.

1 Thessalonians 5:15-17 says, *“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [in no wise precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so we shall ever be with the*

*Lord.” Jesus also referred to this in Matthew 24:26-31: “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as lightening cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with the sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, and from one end of heaven to the other.”* There is considerable conjecture about exactly when this great event will occur, but the only consistent promise I can find in the Bible related to this is God’s oft-repeated statement that He will not pour out His wrath on those that belong to Him. Revelation 15 and following describe the events associated God’s wrath being poured out on the earth, so we can be confident that the rapture/resurrection will occur before this. Just how long before before is not clearly documented in the Bible, but there are several clues. Matthew 24:21-22 says, *“For then there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever*



*shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*" We understand from this passage that the rapture/resurrection will occur during the great tribulation, which will be shortened for the elect's sake. There is one other scripture that I believe is important to this discussion and that is found in Revelation 7:9-17, which describes a great multitude of people from all nations gathered before the throne of God in heaven. These people are clothed in white robes with palms in their hands, and they are identified as those that came out of great tribulation. We conclude that this multitude must be those that were raptured/resurrected.

The sequence of events that occurs after the rapture/resurrection is not clearly spelled out in God's Word. We know that believers must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to have their works tested by the refiner's fire (1 Corinthians 3:13-15), so we assume this occurs soon after we join Him in the clouds. He also clothes our spirit/soul with our immortal body soon after, or during the time we rise from the earth. 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 provides a beautiful description of the believer's burial, and the subsequent resurrection of the immortal body. 1 Thessalonians 4:17 clearly says that we will be with Him always after we join Him in the clouds, so we know that we return to

earth with Him at Armageddon (Revelation 19:14), and remain to help in ruling His kingdom on earth (Matthew 19:28, Revelation 2:26, 20:4) for a thousand years (the millennium). The judgment of the nations occurs at this time, when the Lord separates the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31-48). The sheep, who are those that were chosen, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit at the time of the rapture, were told to come and inherit the kingdom prepared for them, whereas the goats were sent into everlasting punishment.

At the end of the thousand years Satan will be released from his prison in the bottomless pit and will be allowed to deceive the nations one final time, but fire will come down from heaven and devour the army he has raised, and he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. The Great White Throne will then be set to judge all those that have not been judged. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire. The raptured/resurrected will have no part in this judgment for they have already been resurrected, and their works have been weighed at the judgment seat of Christ. Revelation 20:6 says *“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years”*.

## **12. The New Heaven and the New Earth**

Revelation 21 describes the new heaven and new earth that will replace the world we have known. Revelation 21:1 says that “...*the first heaven and the first earth will pass away ...*”, and verse 5 adds that all things will be made new. In Revelation 21:2-3 John sees the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband. Believers into Jesus Christ are referred to as the bride of Christ throughout the NT, and it is assumed from this statement that those who will live in the new Jerusalem come from the raptured/resurrected, possibly the overcomers. There will be other believers there who do not live in the new Jerusalem, but have access to the city through gates in the walls (Revelation 21:24, 27; 22:14). In the New Jerusalem God will dwell with men, and they shall be His people and He will be their God. There will be no temple there, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain. God promises to give of the water of life freely to those that thirst, and overcomers will inherit all things. But the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, whore mongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars will have their part in the lake of fire

and brimstone. Revelation 22 goes on to describe the New Jerusalem by saying that John was shown a pure river of the water of life flowing out from the throne of God. On either side of the river was the tree of life, which produced twelve different types of fruit, one for each month. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. There will be no more curse: but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be there. There shall be no night there, for the Lord God shall be the light, and the servants of the Lord shall reign forever. This is the eternal life promised to all believers into Jesus Christ.

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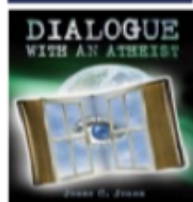


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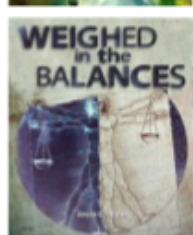
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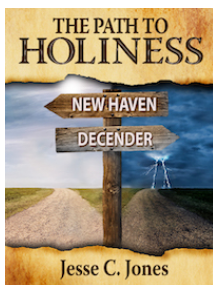
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## About the Author



Mr. Jones retired from his position as Manager of the NASA White Sands Test Facility in December 1981, after spending 29 years as an Aerospace Engineer. After retirement he accepted a position as

Instructor in the Mechanical Engineering Department, Texas Tech University (TTU) in Lubbock, Texas, where he taught senior mechanical design courses and performed research. While at TTU Mr. Jones co-authored two textbooks, one of which was widely used as a senior mechanical design course textbook. Since his retirement from TTU Mr. Jones spends his time teaching Bible classes and writing articles and books on biblical subjects. Mr. Jones is a member of the Lubbock Singing Plainsmen, a barbershop singing group.

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