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The Foundation Teachings of Christianity

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Foundations.....	5
What are the Foundations?.....	5
What Michael Jordan, Roger Federer and Tiger Woods know!	5
How does this relate to Christianity?.....	6
But how important really is it that you have a good foundation?.....	6
So what do you do?	6
Jesus – the cornerstone of Christianity	7
But can you live in a house that is only at foundation stage?.....	7
Repentance.....	9
What were the beginnings of repentance?.....	9
What is repentance?	9
Why should I repent?	10
How does it work?	10
A personal experience of God's protection	10
Do I have to do anything else?	11
A final warning.	11
Faith toward God.....	12
What is Faith?	12
But don't I have to do good too?	12
Righteousness by faith	13
What should you believe?.....	13
Freedom from sin and the law	14
How does it work?	14
Baptism in Water	16
Christian baptism	16
Do you have to be baptised in water?.....	17
Baptism and perfection	17
How are you baptised?	18
Is it necessary to remove the law?.....	18
Baptism in summary	19
Laying on of Hands	20
The importance of receiving the Holy Spirit	20
How do you receive the Holy Spirit?	20
Why receive the Holy Spirit?	21
Who is the Holy Spirit?	21
What is the work of the Holy Spirit?	22
Walking in the Spirit.....	23
You are at war!	23
What is walking in the Spirit?	23
How do you walk in the Spirit?.....	24
What is speaking in tongues?	24
Why does walking in the Spirit and speaking in tongues work?.....	25
Resurrection of the Dead	27

No resurrection, no Christianity.....	27
Atonement for sin.....	27
Resurrection is the key	27
But what is the resurrection?	28
The two resurrections	28
Eternal Judgement	30
The end game.....	30
Judgement in this time	30
The basis of judgement	30
The final judgement	31
The ultimate reward	31
In closing.....	32

Introduction

Can you build a house that will last without a solid foundation? Can you build anything at all such as a marriage, friendship, business venture or even a society without a solid foundation? The answer is clearly no. Christianity is no different. To grow in Christ and mature such that God's word is effective in your life requires that you must first have a solid foundation.

It is hoped that the information you will find in here will open your eyes to the importance of understanding the foundations of Christianity. You may have seen some of these things already and you may see some things with a new twist or in a new light. Whatever happens, I hope you will find this e-book thought provoking and perhaps even challenging.

You may have heard many ideas and opinions as to what are the foundations of Christianity. What you will find here is what the Bible says they are, and I'm sure you will agree that is always the best place to start.

In the book of Hebrews chapter 6 verses 1 and 2 the writer clearly identifies the foundation teachings of Christianity. In this e-book you will learn what these key teachings are, how they apply to you and some examples to gain better insight and understanding.

If you want more information please feel free to send me a note, especially if anything is unclear. You can get more information, make a comment or just have a chat about the e-book by sending a note to john@freegiftfromgod.com

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Please enjoy this e-book and feel free to pass on the e-book to your friends and associates.

I recommend that as you go through this e-book, that you check each of the scriptures quoted to enable you to better understand the points being made. There is no substitute for Bible study and this e-book is intended only to provide some guidance to assist your own personal search and studies of the word.

And now to the subject at hand...the Foundations of Christianity.

The Foundation Teachings of Christianity

Foundations

You may be aware that when a house is built it is crucial that the foundations are solid. If they aren't the whole structure will come tumbling down the first time it is put under stress. Just look what happened to the houses of straw and sticks in the children's story of the Three Little Pigs. But the house of bricks had a foundation and easily withstood the huffing and puffing of the big bad wolf.

"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"

1 Cor 3:11

From a Christian perspective it is no different. If you lack the solid foundation in Jesus Christ, you too will fall when you come under stress from the evil one. You need a solid foundation to achieve a place of stability in Christ Jesus so that you, "...may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles." (Eph 4:14)

Your progression in Christ as a new creation is like the growth of a child. Look in Hebrews 5:11-14 and you will see that as babes in Christ "...you need milk not solid food." The Apostle Peter also said you should "...long for the pure spiritual milk..." (1 Pet 2:2).

What are the Foundations?

This "milk" is the foundation teachings identified in Hebrews 6:1-3 which is highlighted in the text below saying:

- 1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of **repentance** from dead works, and of **faith toward God**,
- 2 Of the doctrine of **baptisms**, and of **laying on of hands**, and of **resurrection of the dead**, and of **eternal judgment**.
- 3 And this will we do, if God permit.

No doubt you noted that the writer was talking about leaving these principles to go on to perfection and that was where he was going in the book of Hebrews. He knew that his audience understood, or should have understood all these things already. But today you will have seen many things with the name of Christianity, which are not, and it is by understanding the foundations that you can sort the good from the bad.

What Michael Jordan, Roger Federer and Tiger Woods know!

Consider the best athletes of the day. Three of those who stand out are Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Roger Federer. They stand out because first and foremost they understand and are experts in the foundational, basic skills of their games. They spent countless hours

on the training fields of their chosen sports learning & honing the foundation skills. They don't even think about it any more, but they continue to practice those same foundations to improve their skills so they can perform them with absolute precision. They continue to practice so that when they are in those difficult positions that come up in game times, they effortlessly find a way to achieve what the rest of us can only dream about.

How does this relate to Christianity?

As a Christian you too need to be able to recall the foundations of Christ to be able to "...withstand in the evil day," (Eph 6:13). You need to have the foundations as deeply ingrained into your life as these star athletes so that your life is unerringly directed and guided by the truth of the word. Without the foundations that allow you to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, how can you move forward? And how will you be able to withstand the pressures and stresses that come against you in your daily walk with God?

Thanks be to Christ who has provided His words in the Bible so that you and I may learn the foundations. You will find in Ephesians 4:11-16 that he gave the church gifts, that some should become apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers to equip Christians so they would become mature in Christ. For you to mature and grow as a Christian it is essential that you build on a strong foundation.

But how important really is it that you have a good foundation?

The sidebar provides a good answer to this question from the Bible and you may want to take a moment to read it before continuing.

The importance of a good foundation:

In Matthew 7:24-26 Jesus provides an example of the importance of a solid foundation. Here he likens those who listen to and do the teachings that He gives, to a builder who lays a solid foundation upon bedrock. In times of storms with strong wind and flooding rains, that house is not moved because it has a strong foundation. But the builder who builds on sand under the same stormy conditions will lose everything because the house has no foundation to anchor it and hold it in place.

You are the same as one of these two types of houses. When you dig deep into the word of God to learn and put the word into practice in your life, you are building the foundation that is built on the Rock of Christ. That is, you both listen and do the words of Christ as he taught us. However if you treat your church life as merely a social activity and do nothing about applying the word you hear, then you will not have the foundation of Christ when times of trouble strike to see you through the storms of life.

In this example you see that a house built without a solid foundation falls when storms hit. You may not know it, but that "house" Jesus is talking about is you. The same is true when you go through adversity. If you have a solid foundation, you will be unharmed, but where there is no foundation you will suffer harm.

So what do you do?

It is not enough that you only hear the words of God. You also must do them to establish the solid foundation.

This is the key from this scripture, to both hear **and do** the word of God. If you will hear and do the word of God you will be solidly grounded. When

the storms of life or temptations come against you, you will not be moved because you have a solid foundation.

If you hear only, you will suffer loss under pressure, as you will have no foundation. When you **apply and do** the teachings of Christ, you build up understanding and resilience through trial, error and practice, just like an elite athlete. This is why you must be a “practising” Christian so that you are trained, through having a firm foundation on the Rock of Christ, to be able to stand when you are tested by adversity.

Jesus – the cornerstone of Christianity

My father was a builder and many a time I helped him lay out the foundations of houses he was building. I learned from him that when stones or bricks are laid in a house they always start at a corner and this cornerstone is the most important stone or brick that is laid. What you find is that when the cornerstone is laid, the position of every other brick in the house is set. If it is in the wrong place, then every brick will be wrong. That is why the cornerstone is critical to building a house.

In 1 Peter 2:6-8 you will see that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of Christianity. It is from Him and through Him that the New Covenant commenced. He laid the foundation teachings and set the standards for your life in Him when he walked the earth. As a Christian you are like a building with Christ as your cornerstone. And like a house your foundation must start with Him.

You can see this principle in Ephesians 2:19-22 where Christ Jesus is the cornerstone and the apostles and prophets laid the foundation of the teachings of the New Covenant in Christ. As you grow in Him you are built into His spiritual dwelling place as part of the spiritual temple of God.

But can you live in a house that is only at foundation stage?

The obvious answer is of course you can't. Once your foundation has been laid, more work is required so that you will become a complete building. But if your foundation is no good, the building (you) will not be able to stand. (Remember the houses of straw and sticks?)

“Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, with instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.”

(Heb 6:1-2)

The quality of a house (you) built on a good foundation can vary greatly depending on the skill and ability of the builder. In 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 you can see there is only one true foundation, Christ Jesus (vs 11), but varying qualities of building upon that foundation. The Apostle Paul shows this quality in terms of, “...gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw...” You may have come across many religions, cults and philosophies in this world that are not founded on Jesus Christ. The Bible tells you that those religions and philosophies that are not founded on Christ will not give you stability in the face of adversity.

The quality of the buildings described by Paul in the verse above refers to the quality of teaching you receive after coming to Jesus. If you follow a lower quality teaching, (wood, hay, straw), Paul states you could suffer loss as a consequence. You may still be saved because the foundation is right, but even so, your foundation will be tested by fire.

So it is important that by the ongoing study of the word of God and seeking Him in prayer, you strive for the "gold" building that you will not only be unharmed by the fires of adversity, but also will actually be refined and strengthened in the same way that gold is purified by fire.

Laying a foundation is just the beginning. There is a cost associated with living the Christian life, just as there is a cost to build a house (Luke 14:28-30). Are you prepared to accept the cost? However if you are prepared to pay the price you will soon find the benefits of life in Christ far outweigh anything that may be required before Christ's return.

So if you are still game we shall start with the first foundation teaching, repentance.

Repentance

You must “begin at the beginning” so the saying goes, so the first of the foundation teachings to consider from Hebrews 6:1-2 is “repentance from dead works.”

What were the beginnings of repentance?

From a timing perspective, this is the starting place for all new Christians. In order to come to Christ you first have to recognise you are a sinner who needs to turn from your old ways to be saved by Christ Jesus. Repentance is turning away from your old ways and sin to begin a new life with Christ.

“The Kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel”

Mark 1:15

When you check out the beginning of the ministries of both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ you find they both began ministry with a call for repentance. John the Baptist’s work and life mission was to prepare the way for the Lord. And when he first began preaching he said, “Repent for the Kingdom of God is at Hand” (Matthew 3:1-12). You’ll find Jesus also began his ministry saying the same words (Matthew 4:12-17).

John baptised people in water as a sign of their repentance telling the people to renounce their sins, to turn and change their ways, to bear fruit that befits repentance (that is, to do good) and to follow Him who was to come after John, that is, Jesus. As a side note, you will come to see that the baptism of repentance taught by John is quite different to the Christian baptism. Under the New Covenant you are baptised into Jesus Christ (Acts 19:1-5) and you

“I have come not to call the righteous but the sinners to repentance”
(Luke 5:32)

“Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”
(Luke 15:7)

will learn more on this when we get to the foundation teaching on baptism.

If you have come to a place of repentance you are now called to perform deeds worthy of being repentant and keep out from your old sinful ways of the past. (Acts 26:19-20). If you have not done so already, it is important that you repent to begin your new life in Christ.

What is repentance?

In Acts 3:19-21 you can see that Peter called the people to repent and turn around that their sins may be blotted out. To repent is to go to the Lord recognising that you have done wrong and to ask His forgiveness. Beyond that simple action repentance is the desire to live your life in accordance with Christ’s word and to shun the evil of this world.

Pretty simple don’t you think? But then as you study the Bible you will find that everything is quite simple and straightforward. The Lord did not make any of His teachings complex; it is only man who complicates them. Sometimes a good way to test if something is from the Lord or not is to look at how complex it is. If you cannot understand it, it may not be from the Lord. It is Satan who complicates to hide the truth with his lies. The Lord tells you to,

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."
Matthew 7:7.

Why should I repent?

The reward for your repentance is...life, as you will see in the example of repentance in Ezekiel 18:19-25. The Lord and all the angels of heaven take great pleasure over a single person who repents (Luke 15:1-10 – see sidebar). It is not the Lord's desire that anyone should perish, but rather that all should reach repentance and come to him (2 Peter 3:9). These verses will give you encouragement and hope and there will be times when you will need both.

The process of Repentance is a source of great joy:

We see in Luke 15 where Jesus gave three parable teachings all of which indicated that there is great joy in heaven whenever a person repents. These are the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son. In each case the Lord is showing first, that the person indicated is in a lost state. Second he indicates in the first two parables, that there is a search and a seeking for the lost individual. Third, we see in the third parable, there is a recognition of this "lost-ness" in the individual and a desire to repent and make things right. And finally we see that when the person is found and turns from their sinful ways to God, there is great rejoicing. The scripture states there is, "...joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents", and "...there will be more joy over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine persons who need no repentance." The basis and reason for such joy is found at the end of the chapter saying, "It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."

How does it work?

Repentance is not a one-time action. Every time you go astray, and the Lord knows you will mess up from time to time, you will need the hope and encouragement that comes through repentance before the Lord. Even in your daily dealings with your family, business associates and other people, when you fall short or make a mistake it is an act of repentance when you say, "I am sorry" which then leads to forgiveness.

You also have great protection as a gift for your repentance, which is not given to the unrepentant. In Luke 13:1-5 you will see that a number of people died in different disasters. Jesus observed that these people were no worse than any others at that time, and He made the point that anyone who did not repent would likewise perish. These people who died just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Do you want this kind of protection? To be taken out of harm's way before disaster strikes? Then follow Jesus teaching of repentance.

A personal experience of God's protection

Now don't get me wrong here. I'm not saying you won't have accidents and issues, but you will be protected. My wife and I had a very serious accident many years ago when a large tree fell on us, just like the tower that fell on those people described in Luke 13:1-5. But unlike them we were protected and did not die nor suffer long-term consequences. Looking back we could see the hand of the Lord with us that night as we set up camp because although we are seasoned campers, on that night we did many things differently for no apparent reason.

Had we set up camp in our normal manner either our children or we would have been killed that night. As it was the children were unharmed and although injured, my wife and I came through the ordeal with no lasting effects.

Do I have to do anything else?

In the same way that you have repented and sought forgiveness from God, He also expects you to forgive others who sin against you when they repent of that sin. You will see this in Luke 17:3-4 and also in Matthew 18:21-22. God has forgiven you so you also must forgive when asked by those who have sinned against you.

You can also see in Romans 2:1-11 that God's kindness was meant to lead us to repentance, not as a one-time act, but as an ongoing way of life. Yes you will make mistakes as you continue in your daily ongoing walk in Christ Jesus. But God in his great mercy and grace has provided for your mistakes in advance by giving you His forgiveness. If you unwittingly make a mistake after coming to Christ, and then recognise your error, you exhibit a "godly grief" producing repentance and leading to your salvation through the desire to clear yourself (2 Corinthians 7:8-11).

You have been called to repentance so do not fail to make the change and live rightly. Also because you now have some insight into God's forgiveness and the processes of repentance, do not use the teachings wrongfully. Whatever you do don't think you can live wrongly try to justify your actions on the basis that God has provided forgiveness and freedom. This is licentiousness and you will be judged harshly for so doing.

A final warning.

Repentance is a serious issue and you should be warned about the failure to carry through with repentance. In Hebrews 6:4-8 you can see if you receive Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, only to then commit apostasy and turn back from the truth and to spurn Christ Jesus, then you have no avenue to be restored to repentance. It is one thing to unwittingly make a mistake, but quite another to commit apostasy and deliberately turn to evil.

You will now have seen that repentance, as the first of the foundation teachings is one of the key teachings of the Christian message. When you are living in repentance you exhibit a number of Godly characteristics. When you repent you show humility by recognising your failures, you show a desire to change for good and you show a willingness to subject yourself to the higher power of God in recognition of His authority. All of these are aspects of repentance and are essential to your walk with Christ. These are also the necessary starting points and pre-cursors to the other foundations of Christianity, the next of which is faith toward God.

Faith toward God

As you read this next foundation teaching on faith toward God, you are likely to see a number of teachings that may be new to you. You should be sure to check the verses mentioned in your Bible as you read because from here on some things may be quite challenging the first time you see them. Please also contact us at questions@freegiftfromgod.com if you would like more information or find anything that is unclear.

Let's move on to the second of the foundation teachings identified in Hebrews 6:1-3... "faith toward God."

What is Faith?

In the simplest sense, faith is believing in something. The basis of Christianity is faith (Romans 1:16-17). However many people find this a difficult issue and a stumbling block. You will find though that this like all of God's teachings is built on simple principles.

In the gospel, "The righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live' "

Rom 1:16-17

The difficulty many people, including church leaders, struggle with is that you cannot **do** anything to be a Christian. Your Christian life is based on what you **believe** not on what you **do** (Romans 9:30-33). I am sure you will note that this is quite the opposite of what most people think. In this world the focus is on what you do, but in Christ it is what you believe. God set it up this way because if Christianity and life were dependant on what you do, some people would be disadvantaged compared to others. Those who have money, skills or power would be more advantaged than those who do not if Christianity were based on doing things. But Christ based our life on faith because this makes you, me and everyone else in the world equal. We all have the same capacity to believe as each other.

But don't I have to do good too?

Of course it is necessary for you to do good, and faith is completed by what you do as shown in James 2:14-26. But good works alone does not and will not make you accepted as a Christian. It doesn't matter if you build a church building or donate millions to charity, if you don't have faith these things are unimportant. It is impossible for you to come to God unless you believe first that God exists and second that He rewards you for seeking Him (Hebrews 11:6). And there is much more than simply believing in the existence of God that you need to know about faith. The Bible tells you in James 2:19 that even the demons believe...and shudder! So if you believe God exists, you have made a good start, but now you should learn the finer details of faith toward God.

Righteousness by faith

In order to come into the presence of God you must be righteous as He is righteous, and it is this aspect where faith is critical to you. All of mankind are born under the power of sin and are sinners, and it is impossible for any of us by our own power to become righteous (Romans 3:10-23). That is why you and I need Christ who died for our sins to give us the ability to be free from sin and to become righteous, that is, righteous by faith. This principle was first shown in the example of Abraham (Genesis 15:1-26).

God told Abraham that he would become the father of many nations and have descendants as many as the stars in the sky or as the grains of sand at the sea. The bible says that Abraham believed God despite the facts that he was about ninety years old and his wife Sarah was about eighty years old and unable to conceive. Under these same conditions you or I would probably struggle to accept what the Lord told Abraham. But Abraham believed God could overcome all these apparent problems that you or I would deem impossible, and so God reckoned or added his faith to him as righteousness (Galatians 3:6). You can see that Abraham did not **do** anything to be proclaimed righteous; it was because he believed God that he was made righteous.

Righteousness was given to Abraham based on what he believed, not what he did. The completion of the promise to him did not come for about another ten years, however

“...not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith”
(Philippians 3:9)

“Abraham believed God, (had faith in God) and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”
(James 2:23)

Abraham did not waiver in his faith nor mistrust God, but he grew strong in his faith, believing that God could and would do what he said (Romans 4). It is important that you note here that Abraham was given something quite specific to believe. And by having faith in God, God said Abraham was righteous.

What should you believe?

When you come to Christ today, this same principle exists. You too, like Abraham, are given something specific to believe so as to receive the free gift of righteousness and have righteousness reckoned to you just like it was for him. However what you have been called to believe is quite different to what Abraham was given to believe, although in both cases you are called to believe God will do what He says He will do. You must believe that Christ died to set you free from your sins and was resurrected to give you a new life, justified (or made righteous) and set free from your bondage to sin (Romans 4:23-25). That's it, as simple as that.

Through Christ's death you have died to your former sins and they have been taken away (John 1:29). You are alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:1-11). You must also believe that by entering into Christ's death through baptism, you are discharged from the law (Romans 7:1-6) and now live a life in freedom, dead to the law that had held you captive to the power of sin (1 Cor 15:56).

Freedom from sin and the law

Discharged from the law? Dead to the law? What on earth are you saying here, you might well ask! You may not have seen these teachings before but I assure you this is what the Bible says and as you continue through this eBook you will see how this works and why it is necessary.

You will find that the process God has put in place, like all things in the Bible, is quite simple. It is quite logical and works like this. Whenever you sin you are breaking God's law because sin is the breaking of the law (1 John 3:4-10). But when you are discharged from the law it is no longer possible for you to break it because you are set free from the law. If you are set free from the law, you cannot break the law and if you cannot break the law you cannot be convicted of sin. It's as simple as that. Take away the law and sin no longer exists because sin is the breaking of the law, but where there is no law there is no sin (Romans 4:15).

How does it work?

The Apostle Paul likened this to the way that a woman is set free from the laws of marriage through the death of her husband. In the same way we too are freed from the laws of God through the death of Christ (Romans 7:1-6). These last two paragraphs are showing you "what" it is that you are called to believe. And this is the basis of our righteousness by faith. Check out the sidebar below for a brief explanation of "how" this all works which will be covered in more detail in the section on baptism.

So if you are set free from the law, it is important now that you no longer consider yourself to be a sinner, but rather that you are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans

How does faith set you free from the law?

To use a modern example, consider a person who goes to a motor racing track. As the person is driving to the track they are confined under the traffic code, which says there is a maximum speed limit, and if they break that speed limit they suffer the consequences of their actions by being fined and/or losing their drivers licence.

However when that same person goes through the gate and onto the racetrack, they are no longer bound by the maximum speed limit and are free to drive as fast as they like without suffering penalties under the law.

This same principle applies for the Christian who comes to God through Christ. In the same way that you are set free from the traffic code by entering the racetrack gate, Jesus Christ is the "gate" through which we enter to be set free from the law of sin and death. Indeed in John 10:9 Jesus states plainly that he is the door by which we enter and are saved. So let us enter and have faith that we are set free.

6:11). The key here is faith. You must believe and have faith in the words of God that He has accepted your entry into Christ Jesus' death through faith. He now sees you as having died, and if you have died, you are no longer under the law but are set free to belong to Christ (Rom 7:4).

There is much more to say about this subject to explain how it works which you will see in the next chapter covering water baptism.

You will find that water baptism and what it truly represents is core to understanding how righteousness by faith works. So if

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you are ready, let's move on to the next of the foundation teachings found in Hebrews 6:1-3 which is baptism.

Baptism in Water

The third of the foundation teachings identified in Hebrews 6:1-2 is baptism. You may be aware that various churches teach about several different baptisms. They talk of baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit. In this section we will cover only baptism in water but will get to baptism in the Holy Spirit when we cover the next of the foundation teachings.

Water baptism is one of the most important but least understood of the Christian rites. The true purpose and meaning of baptism has been clouded because of the acceptance of practices that have no biblical foundation, such as infant baptism and the use of baptism as a kind of initiation into a church. These practices have hidden the truth of baptism and its significance for the Christian.

There were in fact two quite distinct and different water baptisms and the difference between them is seen in Acts 19:1-5. The sidebar in the following pages titled "The contrast of the two baptisms" will give you some insight into the differences between the two. The first baptism as preached by John the Baptist, was a baptism for repentance. Under John's baptism the person being baptised renounced past sins and sought forgiveness from God.

"John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.'"

Matt 3:14-15

Christian baptism

The second form of baptism, which is the one you will learn about here, shows baptism to be a symbolic death with Christ (Romans 6:1-4). You enter into Jesus' death to be set free not only from past sins, but to be removed from the law so as to never sin again (Romans 7:1-6, Galatians 3:22-29). Under the baptism into Jesus Christ's death you are making an appeal to God for a clean conscience through the **taking away of sin**; you are not just seeking repentance (1 Peter 3:18-22, John 1:29). If Christ's baptism were simply for repentance, there would have been no need for him to die, as a baptism for repentance already existed under John the Baptist's ministry.

"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"
(John 1:29)

"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."
(James 2:23)

This is a major difference between what is commonly taught regarding baptism and you will do well to consider this for a moment. Without this understanding of the true meaning of baptism you will struggle constantly believing that you are a sinner and unable to break free from the shackles of sin. But in Christ you have the God given ability to be

freed from sin and freed from the law, the breaking of which is sin, and to be created anew ready to live your life with Christ. Let me emphasise this point once more. In baptism you have died with Christ and you are no longer a sinner because God has taken the law away and if there is no law, you cannot break it. All you have to do is have the faith to believe it.

Do you have to be baptised in water?

Jesus showed in his own example that water baptism was required to be done by everyone in order to fulfil all the requirements of righteousness (Matthew 3:11-17). He showed us that if it was necessary for Him to be baptised, who had never sinned, then we too should follow His example. No one can claim that they do not need to be baptised when Jesus stated in Matthew 3:15, "...For thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness." If you have not yet been baptised then you should seek to do so as soon as possible.

When you are baptised in water you enter into Jesus death. As you go down into the water you are symbolically buried with Christ, and as you are raised up from the water you are symbolically resurrected with him and re-born as a new creation in Christ Jesus. In John 3:1-7 Jesus showed that unless you are born anew of water and the Spirit you are unable to enter the Kingdom of God. Baptism in water is a critical and fundamental key for your entry into God's kingdom.

You are to be baptised in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20) and into Jesus Christ's death for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). However the truth of baptism into Christ Jesus is that your sins are not simply forgiven, but are taken away and removed from you (John 1:29). I ask that you take special note of this point, as it is highly important. If your sins have been taken away, then you no longer have sin in your life and if you have no sin then you are perfect.

Baptism and perfection

Now hold on a minute I hear you say. Perfect? How can that be possible? Surely nobody is perfect except God alone!

The contrast of the two baptisms:

John the Baptist came preaching a baptism of repentance, teaching the people to turn away from their sins and lead a new life. The people were then baptised as a sign that they were making a fresh start.

However when Jesus came, he introduced a new baptism being a baptism into His death. The symbolism and teachings of Jesus baptism is much greater. In this new baptism we believe we have died and that God accepts this symbolic death as if it were our real death. The reason why is that God may forgive us our past sin and set us free from the law. Why do this? Simply because when a person has died they are no longer captive under the law as detailed elsewhere in this paper.

If a person is set free from sin and also set free from the law, then through faith they receive the free gift of righteousness. So we see the two baptisms are quite different. The first recognises our weaknesses, but the second leads to freedom and strength.

Of course you are quite right, only God is truly perfect, but He has seen fit in the faith based baptism teaching to pronounce us righteous through our faith. And if we are righteous as He is righteous, we are perfect. If your sin has been taken away in Jesus Christ's death, then you have no sin and if you have no sin you are perfect.

Remember this is not your doing but is a faith based teaching for you now must "...consider yourselves dead to sin..." (Romans 6:11) since you have died with Christ

through baptism. And, if you are dead, sin no longer has power over you. This matter is

discussed in detail in Romans 6:1-12 and I strongly recommend a detailed and prayerful study of these scriptures.

How are you baptised?

In baptism, you symbolically die with Christ and are raised to live a new life with him. Since you symbolically die and are buried, true baptism requires full immersion in water and you will see also that Jesus and others went down into the water to be baptised (Mark 1:9-10, Acts 8:36-38). This is evident in other scriptures also, which showed that "much water" was required to baptise, again indicating the need for full immersion baptism. For example in John 3:22-23 you can see that John was baptising at Aenon because, "...there was much water there." Again in Acts 10:47-48 when Peter commanded the people to be baptised after they had received the Holy Spirit, it was evident that much water was needed and the people were concerned as water was in short supply. If baptism required just running a cupful of water over the head then "much water" would not be necessary.

So now you can see how you have died to sin by entering into Christ Jesus' death through faith, the bondage of the law has been cancelled and Satan's power has been disarmed by the removal of sin and the law (Colossians 2:8-15).

Is it necessary to remove the law?

You may be asking yourself why is it necessary to be removed from the law? Isn't the law good? Yes the law is good and it shows us the difference between what is right and wrong. There is great wisdom in the law and if you ignore it you do so at your peril. However the law identifies sin for what it is and no one is capable of keeping the law. The law stands constantly condemning you as a sinner when you break it.

However if you are truly following Christ and walking with Him, then in actual fact you don't really need the law. If you do by nature what is right, why do you need the law to tell you it is right? God removed the law through baptism for you so that He could step in and help to change your nature so that your nature will be like His nature and always do what is right. Don't get me wrong; this is a long journey that only begins at baptism.

You see God gave up man to sin because all men sinned and fell short of His glory (Romans 1:29, Romans 3:23). He said he would have nothing to do with sinners and so if He is to step in and work with you, He had to find a way by which you would no longer be a sinner. He did this through Jesus' death and you enter that death by faith to receive His free gift of righteousness.

All you have to do is to believe that you have been set free from the law and sin, and to consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11-12). In just one sentence this is the essence of the Christian faith.

Baptism in summary

The essential aspect of water baptism is that it provides the doorway for entry into God's kingdom, and that doorway is Jesus Christ's death. You enter into his death through faith by believing He has set you free from sin and the law in your water baptism.

I have touched briefly on the teachings of freedom in Christ but to do this subject justice requires a deeper study. Keep your eyes open for such a study in the future, but in the mean time you can look at all of Galatians, Romans chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 for a lot of the teachings on freedom. For the present though, we will continue the teachings on the foundations of Christianity, the next of which concerns the laying on of hands.

Laying on of Hands

The fourth of the foundation teachings identified in Hebrews 6:1-2 is "...laying on of hands..." You will find as you search the Bible that there are several purposes for which laying on of hands is performed. From a foundations perspective though, you need only be concerned about laying on hands for the purpose of receiving the Holy Spirit.

"For the promise [of the Holy Spirit] is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him."

Acts 2:39

The importance of receiving the Holy Spirit

If you look at the book of Joel you will see that God promised to pour out His Holy Spirit on all mankind. Peter refers to Joel when he makes the statement that the promise is open to all (Acts 2:38-39).

Now you have seen already that John the Baptist came to bear witness to Jesus Christ and prepare the way for Him. In John 1:32-34 he bore witness firstly that Jesus was the Son of God, secondly that he received the Holy Spirit and thirdly that He came so that man could also be receive the Holy Spirit.

Now why do you suppose that this was so important that the Lord organised for John to bear witness to him over these matters? Simply because you must receive the Holy Spirit to be able to worship God in the Spirit. God is Spirit and he seeks us to worship Him in the Spirit (John 4:23-24). This is referred to in the Bible in some places as Walking in the Spirit. Although walking in the Spirit is not one of the foundation teachings, it is important to understand the fundamentals of it. To assist you with this it is included as a separate section after this chapter.

The disciples were told by Jesus when He left them after his resurrection that they were to wait in Jerusalem when they would receive the promise of the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 1:4-8). This occurred at Pentecost the power to become the children of God (John 1:12) through being transformed by the Holy Spirit into His image. This power is still available to you, me and anyone else who comes to Him seeking to receive the Holy Spirit.

How do you receive the Holy Spirit?

You can receive the Holy Spirit in one of two ways. The first method is that the Lord may simply give the Spirit to you, as he did with the Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and also when the Gentiles first received the Spirit in Caesarea (Acts 10:44-48). In both these cases the Spirit was received accompanied with signs; specifically speaking in tongues (other languages), prophecy and the sounds of rushing wind and fire resting on the apostles. Typically (though not necessarily always), the sign of tongues shows a person they have received the Holy Spirit. If you look at John 3:5-8 Jesus made the point that it was the "sound" of the Spirit, like the sound of the wind, that provided evidence of the Spirit's presence.

The second method by which you can receive the Holy Spirit is through the laying on of hands with prayer to ask the Lord to give you the gift of the Spirit. It is this method that we are most interested in as it relates to the foundation teachings. Peter and John used this method when they were sent to Samaria by the church to do this work so that the people could receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-21). You will also see that this was the method used by Paul in the upper country of Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7) where he laid hands on a group of about twelve disciples.

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied”

Acts 19:6

“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.”

John 3:5

You should note these two verses well as they clearly show that the disciples who had been baptised did not automatically receive the Holy Spirit, which some people wrongly believe to occur. Laying on of hands and prayer was necessary to complete the process by which the Spirit was given. This is shown also in Luke 11:13 where you are instructed to ask for the Holy Spirit and it will be given to you.

Why receive the Holy Spirit?

You may be asking yourself, why is it necessary to receive the Holy Spirit? You will see that as with baptism, Jesus received the Spirit and it was only after He received the Holy Spirit that he received the power to commence His ministry.

In the same way it is through the Spirit that you will receive power to be transformed into the image of God. This work of transformation within you is the work of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17-18) and much of the process revolves around your ability to walk in the Spirit. Now if you don't have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, then walking in the Spirit is not possible. This will be covered in more depth in the next chapter.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

In the Bible you can see quite clearly the answer to this question. In Hebrews 1:7 the writer restates a prophecy from the Old

Testament saying, “Of the angels he says, “Who makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.” Now if you have been following in your Bible you will recall in Acts that

Why receive the Holy Spirit?

There are numerous reasons identified, but three stand out.

First, God is spirit and seeks us to worship him in the Spirit. Second, because we are flesh, we do not understand the things of the Spirit and cannot transform ourselves into “spirit-mindedness”. Thus the work of the Holy Spirit is to make this transformation occur. Third, although we live in the physical world, we are waging a war spiritually and we do not have the weapons of defence or attack to be able to win the spiritual war.

Finally it is through the Spirit that we receive power to achieve all of these things as well as the power to become the children of God. In the final analysis, whilst all the things such as speaking in tongues and miraculous works will pass away (1 Cor 13:8), it is the power to be the children of God that is important for only as children of God will we receive the inheritance and the promise of eternal life.

when the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles at Pentecost it appeared as the sound of rushing winds and tongues of fire resting on each of the apostles. This is clear evidence of the fulfilment of that prophecy.

You should also consider the work of the Holy Spirit, which is to minister to Christians and transform them into God's image. In Hebrews 1:13-14 it says, "But to what angel has he ever said, 'Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet'? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?" You and I are those who are being ministered to and we are the ones who are to obtain salvation. Based on this scriptural evidence you should be able to conclude that the Holy Spirit is an angel.

What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

In brief the work of the Holy Spirit is to be your Counsellor dwelling within you (John 14:15-17). The Spirit is also your teacher to bring all things to your remembrance (John 14:25-26). The Holy Spirit is your guide leading you into all truth as He has access to all that Jesus and the Father have (John 16:13-15). Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to you from the Father and the Spirit bears witness to Jesus in you (John 15:26-27).

The sum of all this should provide you enough compelling reasons why it is so important that you receive the Holy Spirit. And this is before we even get into looking at what the Spirit can do for you by walking in the Spirit.

So with no further ado we shall cover walking in the Spirit before going on to the next of the foundation teachings.

Walking in the Spirit

If faith is the key to your life of transformation and victory through Jesus Christ in the New Covenant, then Walking in the Spirit is the active application of your faith to achieve those ends. It is the work of the Spirit to change you into the likeness of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:17-18) and it is through Walking in the Spirit that this is achieved in you.

“Walking in the Spirit is the active application of our faith in Jesus Christ to overcome in this world.”

You are at war!

When you walk in the Spirit you are able to fight and defeat the evil that comes against you. Make no mistake, when you are a Christian you are at war, but not war as this world understands it. The war you are waging is against the evil spiritual realm and is not of this world (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). So too then the weapons of your warfare also are not of this world but are of divine power.

When you read the verse above you will see that the key to winning the spiritual war is to be able to, "destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ." Walking in the Spirit is how you achieve this.

“But I say walk by the Spirit and you do not gratify the desires of the flesh”

Galatians 5:16

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God”

Romans 8:14

“He condemned sin in the flesh in order that the just requirement of the law would be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

Romans 8:3-4

What is walking in the Spirit?

Galatians 5:16-26 shows that if you walk by the Spirit you do not gratify the desires of the flesh which are opposed to the desires of the Spirit, and those who belong to Christ Jesus have put to death the passions and desires of the flesh. In order to please God you must worship Him in Spirit and truth because God is Spirit (John 4:23-24).

This again is emphasised by Paul in Romans 8:3-9 who shows that the just requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit. He further shows that to set your mind on the flesh is death, but to set your mind on the Spirit is life and peace, and that the mind set on the flesh cannot please God because it is hostile to God's way.

So you see, there is a recurring theme in all of these passages. All of them indicate that a change must take place within you, led by the Spirit, and that change is in the way you think. It is your thoughts, driven by your desires that bring forth sin and death (James 1:14-15). It is because of this that the writer of Hebrews says that sin "...clings so closely..." and that you must lay it aside if you are to move forward in Christ (Hebrews 12:1).

How do you walk in the Spirit?

You are called to, "...take every thought captive to obey Christ..." as mentioned above, but how do you do this?

In Philippians 4:8-9 Paul shows you that you should think and set your minds upon whatever is true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent or worthy of praise. Thinking on these things is the application of Walking in the Spirit. So when you are being tempted, suffering, or your desires and emotions are running amok... change your thinking by setting your mind on one of these things, and the "God of peace will be with you".

Examples of what you can do in a practical sense include; reading your bible, singing spiritual songs, praying, praising and worshiping the Lord, etc. All these things will be of great benefit, as they require you to think about something else other than the problem or issue that is troubling you.

And there is a still better way!

The apostle Peter told you not to be surprised at the fiery ordeals which come upon you to test you (1 Peter 4:12-13) and that you should expect trials and tribulations. But sometimes when you are under attack you get so low that you will feel beaten and won't have the energy to Walk in the Spirit in the ways mentioned above. Sometimes the attack is not from within, but is direct opposition from the enemy. Sometimes, even in praying you just don't know what to say to the Lord because you feel so low. Sometimes you wish someone would just step in and take it all away. I know about these things because I have experienced them all myself. So how do you wage war when you are in these situations?

The answer is by speaking in tongues.

What is speaking in tongues?

Now I know there are a great many people in the Church who do not exercise the gift of tongues and it is not preached in their places of worship. I also know of some people who have received the gift but do not fully understand its purpose. You may be in one of these categories so I urge you to read on as it may help you understand the power of this gift of the Spirit. Remember, every gift given by the Lord to his people must be good for us and also must have a real purpose. The Lord does not do anything without a purpose.

There are many diverse and strange opinions about speaking in tongues and I do not permit me to address them all. For the purpose of this section though, you should understand that tongues are one of the gifts of God and are as valid today as they were 2,000 years ago. The Bible says that, "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever..." (Hebrews 13:8), and also that the gifts and call of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). As this is true, then tongues are here to be accepted and used by you as a gift given by God. Furthermore Paul stated that he wanted all Christians to speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5) and not to forbid speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:39).

But just what exactly is speaking in tongues? In a nutshell it is the indwelling Holy Spirit speaking to God on your behalf with your voice in a foreign language. This may be for the purpose of prayer, praise, and worship or as spiritual warfare.

In Romans 8:13-17 you are told, "...if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live," and, "...all who are led by the Spirit are sons of God." This section further says, "When we cry 'Abba, Father' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God..." So you can see it is by the active working of the Spirit, at your instigation that you obtain the victory. The Spirit will not take you over against your will, as you have not received a Spirit of bondage (vs. 15, also 1 Corinthians 14:32). But when you submit yourself to God and give your tongue over to the Spirit to speak for you in tongues, He is able to give you the victory on your behalf.

In Ephesians 6:13-17 you are instructed by Paul to, "...take the whole armour of God", which included the "sword of the Spirit". Now a sword is not just for defence, but is also a weapon of attack, and you can see here the Spirit likened to such a weapon. While it is quite possible for the Spirit to guide your mouths and give you words in your native language, as occurs in prophesy to instruct others, when you speak in tongues it is the Spirit speaking directly to God on your behalf. So when you are weak or under attack and don't know what to pray; speak in tongues for the Spirit to intercede directly to God on your behalf with "sighs too deep for words," as it says in Romans 8:26-27. Because when you speak in tongues the Spirit is talking to God on your behalf in the tongues of "...men and of angels..." (1 Corinthians 13:1).

One other value of speaking in tongues is that when you speak in tongues you are spiritually up-built and edified. You become stronger and can overcome your problems, weaknesses or the attacks of the enemy through handing your tongue over to the Spirit to speak to God on your behalf (1 Corinthians 14:4-5). By doing this you also allow the peace of God to descend upon you. I can testify personally that this works.

An Example of Walking in the Spirit:

In Acts 16:19-40 we see Paul and Silas having been beaten and thrown into prison. While they would have been forgiven for grumbling at their misfortune, they did not complain but rather exercised their faith through Walking in the Spirit by prayer and singing hymns to God. What is more the prisoners listened to them.

At around midnight, an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, the doors were opened and everyone's fetters were unfastened. As a result the jailer was about to kill himself, believing the prisoners had escaped, when Paul and Silas called out to him. Instead the jailer found God with his family, Paul and Silas were fed and had their wounds cleaned and the following day left the town with an apology from the leaders of the city.

Why does walking in the Spirit and speaking in tongues work?

But why does this work? It works because you are humbling yourself under God's hand and turning your problems over to Him through the Spirit. As soon as you commence speaking in tongues when you are in a difficult situation, you are essentially saying, "Lord help me!" and recognising that He has the authority in all situations where you do not. This is humility and is the essence of Walking in the Spirit.

The proud person on the other hand says, "I can do this myself!" and does not hand it over to the Lord by walking in the Spirit. Tongues are both a form of praise and a form of prayer, and by turning our tongue over to the Spirit you are exercising your faith in God through Walking in the Spirit. You are setting your mind on the things of the Spirit, and after all what better way is there to have the victory than to use the sword of the Spirit directly!

Finally there are the promises from God that He will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength but with the temptation will provide you with the way of escape that you may endure it (1 Corinthians 10:13). The way of escape is through Walking in the Spirit as it is by this process you hand the temptation or the problem over to Him to lead us through. And when you have come through and endured the trials, God himself will, "...restore, establish and strengthen you" (1 Peter 5:10). What a marvellous promise to end with as we move to the next foundation teaching, which is the Resurrection of the Dead.

Resurrection of the Dead

The fifth of the foundation teachings identified in [Hebrews 6:1-3](#) is, “the resurrection of the dead.”

No resurrection, no Christianity

Resurrection of the dead is pivotal to the Christian faith, since we believe that Christ died and was resurrected, and through Him we have the hope of entering a new life. Jesus said of himself that, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25-26). You are called to believe through baptism that you have died and been buried with Christ as you go down into the water. You are also called to believe that as you are raised out of the water you are resurrected with him and your new life is hidden with Him seated at the right hand of the Father (Colossians 3:1-4, John 11:17-27).

“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”

John 11:25-26

The starting point of the apostle’s ministry was to bear testimony to Jesus Christ’s resurrection, and you will see evidence of this in much of their early ministry (Acts 2:22-36, Acts 1:21-22, Acts 4:1-4, Acts 4:32-33).

“It [righteousness] will be reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”

Romans 4:24-25

Atonement for sin

In Hebrews 9:22, you can see that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. In order to atone for the sin of man there needed to be a perfect sacrifice.

Death is the outcome of sin (Romans 6:23), however during his life on earth Jesus did not sin and so was perfect, yet He suffered death like a sinner. As he was perfect He could not be held by death because the penalty was unjustified. He was able to take his life again through resurrection and open the way for you and I to escape our bondage to death by symbolically taking on his unwarranted death in our baptism (John 10:14-18). Jesus was the perfect sacrifice that was made so that the shedding of blood could occur to take away our

sins.

Resurrection is the key

The apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15 that resurrection is taught as of first importance. Resurrection is the key to the New Covenant because without Christ’s resurrection, you would never be able to be freed from your sin.

The basis of what you believe through faith in your baptism into Christ’s death was that as He was resurrected from death into a new life with the Father, so too you will be able to

enter new life with God through Jesus' resurrection. Through your baptism you should believe that you have died and are raised with Him to walk a new life in the Spirit with God, fully believing that you are dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:1-11). Jesus died for your sins and was resurrected so that you could be righteous and so that you would become holy. In this manner you die a physical body and are raised a spiritual body (Romans 4:24-25).

The apostle Paul considered his whole pre-Christian life to be worthless compared to knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection (Philippians 3:1-11), as he hoped to be part of the resurrection of the dead, as do we all.

But what is the resurrection?

You will see in the New Testament that the Sadducees wrongly believed there is no resurrection. Jesus upbraided them sternly for holding such a belief. He further showed that God is God of the living not the dead and that those who have passed away in the flesh are actually still alive in the spirit (Luke 20:27-40, Matthew 22:23-33).

How the Resurrection of the Dead occurs:

In Ezekiel 37:1-14 the resurrection of the dead is described.

The prophet has a vision of a valley of dry bones and as he moved amongst the bones the Lord said to him, "Can these bones live?" He was then told to prophesy to the bones. He did as commanded and then heard a rattling as the bones began to come together. As he continued, flesh and sinew and skin began to cover the bones but they did not yet live.

He was then told to prophesy again to the breath, and as he did so breath came into the bodies on the ground and they stood up on their feet.

This vision is an example of what we may expect the final resurrection will be like. Of key significance is that it clearly shows that although the bodies have and can be reconstructed physically, they do not live, and thus cannot stand up, until the breath of the spirit comes into them. It is only when this occurs that they become living souls.

The New Testament in Revelation 20 shows you that there will be two separate resurrections. The first will be the resurrection of the righteous into eternal life and the second will be the resurrection of all the rest of the dead, both great and small for judgement. Your aim should be to take part in the first resurrection, as that is far better.

The two resurrections

How the resurrection of the dead will occur is shown in several scriptures. An example of how the resurrection will occur is seen in Ezekiel 37:1-14 (see sidebar).

At the return of Christ the first resurrection of those who died in Christ will occur and they, along with the remaining Christian believers still living, will be caught up into the air to meet Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This is

commonly referred to as the Rapture. Can you imagine the joy that you would experience in meeting Christ, the angels and those who have gone before in this way! Words fail me to begin to describe the feeling I can only imagine you would experience. It will be awesome!

Those who enter the first resurrection are greatly blessed, as the second death, which is the destruction of the spirit of man, will have no power over them.

The second resurrection is at the final judgement when all people will be raised and judged according to what they have done during their time on the earth (Revelation 20:4-15, John 5:28-29).

This brings us to the last of the foundation teachings, which is Eternal Judgement.

Eternal Judgement

The sixth and final of the foundation teachings identified in Hebrews 6:1-2 is "...eternal judgement."

The end game

Eternal judgement is the final stage of the whole work of God's creation and is the ultimate end of His plan for man. The primary purpose of your life in this world is to give you the opportunity to make a decision whether to walk with God or to do the opposite. It is at the final judgement that God will determine whether you have made the right decision and are able to continue to live with Him.

Man will be judged on the basis of three main things; His actions and behaviours in the world, the words that he speaks and his belief in Jesus Christ

Judgement in this time

The Father has given all judgement to his Son, Jesus Christ (John 5:19-29). If you are a Christian you have a great advantage, as it is possible for you to believe the Father and listen to the Son and be able pass out of judgement directly into eternal life. By this I mean you can become part of the first resurrection and escape final judgement because you have already been judged in your lifetime and found to be worthy. It says that judgement begins with people and household of God (1 Peter 4:12-19).

"For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury."

Romans 2:6-8

It is the hope of all Christians that they will be judged worthy to enter eternal life with the Father in His kingdom. Matthew 25:31-46 will show you that mankind will be separated into two groups. The first group are those judged worthy to receive and enter into eternal life, while the remainder are judged unworthy and will be sent to eternal destruction.

The basis of judgement

Judgement will be broadly based upon your beliefs and behaviours in obedience to the principles in the word of God. You should note also that on that final day of judgement, every person will stand alone at the throne of God. So it is essential you find Gods way for yourself, as no one else will be able to save you or stand as advocate for you on that day.

Romans 2:1-11 shows that you will be judged by what you have done in this lifetime. In the earlier foundation teachings you will recall that by faith you have been set free from sin and the law through baptism into Christ Jesus. However this does not give you license to break the law or behave wrongly, which is licentiousness.

The gift of freedom God gives you is meant to lead you to repentance, not to behave wrongly. If you do not repent and deliberately continue to behave wrongly, you will be judged the same as the rest of mankind and fail to receive eternal life (Jude 1:5-7). If you do sin deliberately after having received the truth of Jesus and the word of God, and if you hold up your Christianity in contempt and turn from God and commit apostasy, then you are judged as a sinner. There will no longer be any sacrifice to cleanse your sin but only the fearful prospect of judgement as advised in Hebrews 10:26-31.

On the final day of judgement, all people will be judged for every careless word they speak (Matthew 12:33-37). So you must ensure you continue to speak and to act in accordance with the teachings of Christ.

The final judgement

Revelation 20:1-15 provides you with details of the resurrection and judgements of man. When the first resurrection occurs at the return of Christ, those who died in Christ are raised to live with Him as priests on the earth. These people are blessed and the second death has no power over them, which is when the spirit of man will be destroyed.

Christ's reign lasts for a thousand years, after which the second resurrection occurs when all people who ever lived will be raised and judged according to what they have done. Some will go into eternal life and others will go into eternal destruction.

The Judgement of God:

As Christians we believe and are told in the scriptures that it is appointed for a person to be born, to live their lives, to die once and after that comes judgement (Hebrews 9:27).

Thus we are given the opportunity only in this lifetime to make one decision; whether we choose to live a life pleasing to God or whether we desire to turn from him. The whole point of life on this earth for mankind is to determine how he wants to live. This life is merely an introductory phase to see what we will choose to be like and to determine if we are worthy of going into eternal life with God.

Imagine what could be done and achieved if you were not limited by the wearing out of the body and death! The possibilities are limitless, and this is the real promise on offer to us. The ability to grow continuously in the presence of God and without the fear of death, sin, sickness or any form of evil to stand in our way. This is the hope of God's righteous judgement for us.

The ultimate reward

After the final judgement, you will see the creation of the New Jerusalem where you will live with God forever. The beauty and wonder of the new city is described in Revelation 21 and you will live into eternity with God, Jesus Christ, the angels and his people in a world without crime, disease or any form of evil. This is the ultimate reward for the Christian.

You should understand that although this subject is a quite fearful matter, you must remember that God has the power to protect His people and rescue them from trial and persecution while keeping the ungodly people under punishment until the day of judgement (2 Peter 2:4-11). God has not left you without hope and has not left you unprotected, but rather He has provided many weapons of defence and protection to enable you to wage the

spiritual war, (Eph 6:10-17) so that you will gain the victory in Jesus Christ, and not fall into judgement.

In closing...

This now completes the foundation teachings as defined in Hebrews 6:1-2. I hope that you gained some insight and found this information of value, even if only by way of reminding you of things you may have learned elsewhere.

As indicated in the beginning, this is not intended to replace your study of the Bible, which is both necessary and vital to your spiritual walk with Christ.

Should you wish to know more, or if you have any comments or questions about this study or anything else, please feel free to email me at john@freegiftfromgod.com and also check out the other resources on our website at www.freegiftfromgod.com.

All teaching, ministry and other items provided by www.freegiftfromgod.com are free of charge as it is our firm belief that God's word should not be peddled but should be freely available to all.

I encourage you to continue to study the Bible and to seek out the truth of the gospel to find the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

May God bless you and keep you.