

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN BIRTH

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May be used as a study aid for groups or personal use in conjunction with the Book, CD or DVD of the same title.

1. Born Again

- * We need to give new believers a proper start in life.
(The way we begin is so important.)
- * Must use New Testament language, this leads to New Testament thinking.
- * Text out of context becomes a pretext for our own thinking.
- * Where in the Bible do we get instructions on evangelism ?
 - Gospels too early (Jewish/Christian transition period)
 - Epistles and Revelation too late (written to Christians)
 - So we look in Acts (In particular chapters 8 & 19)
- * **Four Steps to Freedom** -
 1. Repent of your sins towards God.
 2. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 3. Be Baptised in Water.
 4. Receive the Holy Spirit.(The Normal Christian Birth - "RBBR")
- * All four - Anticipated in the Gospels (by John the Baptist and Jesus)
 - Assumed in the Epistles and Revelation
 - Articulated in Acts
- * Emphasis differs in different Churches.
 - Liberals - Repentance
 - Evangelicals - Faith (believe)
 - Sacramental - Baptism
 - Pentecostal - Holy Spirit
- * All four steps are acts of both man and God.

Conversion is mainly what we do (turn around) - repent and believe.
Regeneration is mainly an act of God (being born again) - baptism and receive the Holy Spirit.

Need both Conversion and Regeneration to be alive in the Kingdom of God.

2. Repent of Your Sins

* REPENTANCE (Mark 1:14-15, Luke 3:1-18, Acts 2:37-39)

- First step to enter the Kingdom of God
- Godly sorrow leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- Takes time
- Cannot be general
- Result - God is better than I thought. I'm much worse than I thought.
- Three stages: A. Thought
B. Word
C. Deed

A. THOUGHT - CHANGING YOUR MIND (Romans 12:2)

- Think God's way
- The more you come to understand Gods holiness, the more you realise your need for repentance.

B. WORDS OF REPENTANCE (1John 1:9)

- Sins. Confess them, name them specifically, be accountable and responsible for them. Renounce them.
- We are not the result of what's been done to us . We are the result of what we've done about what's been done to us .
- We are the result of our choices

C. DEEDS OF REPENTANCE (Luke 3:8, Luke 19:8-9, Acts 26:20)

- Prove repentance by your deeds
- Put the past right
- Leads to freedom

When helping someone to repent, help them to do three things :

1. Be Serious - Where will their present way of life lead them ? (Luke 12:4-5)
- Perish. Can't be used for the purpose for which it was made. Of no use to God.

- Hell is God's incinerator for perished people.
- 2. Be Specific (name sins) - Guided conversation
 - Detailed list
 - Immediate revelation
- 3. Be Sensible - Emotions (moral not psychological guilt)
Can't put everything right.

3. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ

BELIEVE IN = FAITH

1. FAITH IS HISTORICAL (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

- * Based on facts , not feelings
- * Jesus died , was buried and was raised (with a body).

2. FAITH IS PERSONAL (John 6:28-29)

- * Faith "in" Jesus , not "that" Jesus
- * Trust and obey Jesus. He is Saviour AND Lord. (John 14:1 & 15)
- * Relate personally to Jesus as He is ALIVE!!
- * Talk to , relate to and know Him as your own friend.

3. FAITH IS VERBAL (Romans 10:9 -13)

- * Faith needs to be expressed in words in two ways :
Talk to Jesus
Talk about Jesus

4. FAITH IS PRACTICAL (James 2:14-26)

- * Faith is something you do (not just think and say)
- * Faith without actions is dead
- * When did you last believe in Jesus (That is, take a risk)
- * Our secure life is a barrier to us acting / living in faith.

5. FAITH IS CONTINUAL (Galatians 2:20, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 11))

- * Not a moment of faith but a lifetime of faith
- * Trust = go on trusting despite everything
- Believe = go on believing
- * Faith of today saves me today.

How to help someone into Faith :

- * Tell them the facts (evidence)

- * Show them the Gospel

Demonstrate the Kingdom, then declare it .

Show the deeds of a changed life.

- * Encourage them to pray in their own words

- * Teach them to set goals of faith

- * Urge them to go on believing every day (stretch yourself).

4. Be Baptised in Water

- * Where does Baptism fit into salvation ?

What is God doing for a believer when they are baptised ?

- * John the plunger, dipper, soaker, drencher.

All believers are now priests (1 Peter 2:9), and can have a washing in water (baptism) and an anointing in oil (filling with Holy Spirit) .

- * Baptism brings what you are already in (repentance & faith) to a climax .

- * No such thing as an unbaptised believer in the early church. (Acts 2:37-42, 8:12, 8:36-38, 10:47-48, 16:13-15, 16:32-34, 18:8, 19:4-5, 22:12-16)

Jesus' command: " Go.... and make disciples..., baptising them " (Matt 28:19)

- * Baptised = drench, dip, dunk, deluge, soak, sink, swamp, saturate .

- * Baptism in the New Testament has two meanings :-

A **bath** for those who are dirty (cleansing) . (1 Peter 3:20-21)

A **burial** for those who are dead . (Colossians 2:12, Romans 6:3-4)

It is not a symbol but an event .

- * Why was it done ?

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptised **will be saved**.

John 3:5 You must be born **of water** and of Spirit.

Acts 2:38 Repent and be baptised **for the forgiveness of your sins**.

Acts 22:16 Get up ! Be baptised , and **wash your sins away** .

1 Peter 3:21 Baptism **now saves you**. It is more than just washing your body. It means turning to God with a clear conscience.

* Baptism is a deliverance .

We are baptised into Christ's death, buried with Him and raised with Him. (Romans 6:3-11)

Just as the Israelites were baptised into Moses and out of Pharoah's reach when they crossed the Red Sea , so when you are baptised you are delivered from the territory of Satan.

You can say: "Satan, you attended my funeral. You have no more dominion over me ."

* Baptism identifies you with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. (Colossians 2:11-12)

* For a penitent believer , water is a means of grace and has a spiritual effect to enable them to live a clean righteous life.

5. Receive The Holy Spirit

* Western education is based on Greek philosophy not Hebrew thinking.

Physical events can have a spiritual effect. For example, eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge, taking bread & wine in communion, water in baptism.

* In New Testament it was normal to receive the Holy Spirit through a physical act - the laying on of hands by anyone. (Acts 19:6)

* Every Christian needs two baptisms – in water and in Spirit. (John 3:5)

Water baptism deals with the past - leaves you clean and empty.

Therefore you need filling with the Holy Spirit for the future.

* Easter is repeated in the believer's life when they are buried and raised in baptism.

Pentecost is repeated in the believer's life when they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

* Receiving the Holy Spirit is a definite experience . (Acts 8:1-17 and 19:1-7)

When Jesus on earth, you could receive Him (John 1:11-13). After His ascension no one

told to receive Jesus.

Jesus replaced on earth with the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-17), so we must receive the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Spirit is the basis of our assurance of salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14).

* OUTWARD EVIDENCE always accompanies filling with the Spirit.

If filled , then overflow !

Whatever you're full of will come out of your mouth.(Matthew 12:34)

What happens ? Spontaneous spiritual speech.

* Languages - The only gift of the Spirit to help you.

Not "must I speak in tongues"(shows reluctance),
but " may I" (Acts 2:1-4)

* Praise

* HOW TO RECEIVE ?

Seek it after repenting , believing and being baptised (Acts 2:37-39).

By Praying - " Go on asking " (Luke 3:21-22 and 11:9-13, Acts 8:15-17).

By laying on of hands (Acts 19:6).

* Reasons for not receiving the gift after praying and laying on of hands :-

Not fully repented. Not acted in faith. Not baptised in water.

Don't know what to expect.

Don't know how to receive the gift (you don't know you have a gift till you use it -TRY !)

Fear - loss of self control ; what will others think.

False teaching - " Tongues are from Satan ", "Supernatural is not for today".

National temperament - don't show emotions.

Evangelical tradition - doesn't include gifts of the Spirit.

know Holy Scripture (the writings), better than Holy Spirit (the Person).

6. Saved at Last

* We need to "unlearn" unbiblical teaching.

* The typical "sinners prayer" is inadequate as it only covers 1.5 of the 4 steps of New Testament rebirth.

Repentance – Should be specific. Must repent towards God.

Faith – Must believe in Jesus, not receive Jesus.

Baptism in water – not mentioned.

Receive the Holy Spirit – not mentioned.

So people are often told they are “saved” when they are only half born again.

* God is in the business of salvaging and restoration (recycling).

Salvation is a process. All are **being saved** .

* What is it to be Saved ? Saved from what ?

SAFE FROM HELL (False) SALVAGED FROM SINS (True)

Not new testament teaching. New Testament teaching.

Insurance policy for next world. Jesus came to save you from your sins .
(Saving you from hell is a bonus).

Concerned only with getting you across a line. Salvation is **The Way**. (Jesus didn't command us to get decisions, but to make disciples.)

Justification only. Justification leading to sanctification.
Jesus is seen as Saviour only. Jesus is Saviour AND Lord.
Only believe, with some repentance. **Repent, Believe, Be Baptised, Receive the Spirit.**

No connection with baptism in water and spirit. Need baptism in water and spirit.

Only interested in the minimum to try to escape hell. Want everything God can give you to live right and be useful to God.

Insurance policy for death God wants to give you holiness here and happiness hereafter (not the other way round).

* The good news of Christianity is not that you **must** live right , but that you **can** live right. When you repent and believe, God accepts and adopts you (justification), in order that you may live a holy life (sanctification). (2 Timothy 1:6&7)

* Process of full Salvation :-

Justification - God accepts and forgives you .

Sanctification - God makes you holy .

Glorification - God gives you a new body in a new heaven and a new earth.

* "Once saved always saved " - Unbiblical

- Used by people who want to be "safe from hell" .

- New Testament writers warn us to "go on believing". For example, 2 1/2 million Israelites left Egypt but only two arrived in Canaan . (This is used by three New Testament writers as a warning to believers) .

No one is "safe" till they stand in glory.

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