

[illegible]

2 Corinthians 5:17

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN BIRTH

BAPTISM NOTES

1. Born Again

The way we start in life determines how we live - new believers need a proper start to the Christian life.

Like in physical birth, **defects at delivery** will result in **disabilities and disease** later in life.

A healthy birth in a nurturing environment, is like planting a seed in fertile soil for an abundant harvest.

Where in the Bible do we get instructions on Evangelism and New Birth?

- Gospels are too early, being a Jewish/Christian transition period.
- Epistles and Revelation too late since they are written to Christians.
- We find it in **Acts** - in particular, chapters 8 & 19.

Four Steps to Freedom

1. **R**epent of your sins towards God.
2. **B**elieve in the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. **B**e Baptised in Water.
4. **R**ecieve the Holy Spirit.

The Normal Christian Birth is related to the Trinity – Father, Son & the Holy Spirit!

All four - Anticipated in the Gospels by John the Baptist and Jesus.

- Assumed in the Epistles and Revelation.
- Articulated in Acts.

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.

Faith is essential founding element for the entire spiritual rebirth. Whoever seeks repentance from sins, a burial of the self-life and the indwelling Holy Spirit must **believe that God exists** and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). We need to be saved by a FAITH that repents, that submits to water baptism and receives the Holy Spirit!

Ephesians 2:8-10, 'God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.'

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN BIRTH

BAPTISM NOTES

2. Repent of Your Sins

- What does it mean?**
- It is not a feeling of **regret** or **remorse**.
 - it is the first step to enter the Kingdom of God.
 - Mark 1:14-15, Luke 3:1-18, and Acts 2:37-39
 - What we have done to God is a **Godly sorrow** that leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10).
 - It takes time & cannot be general.
 - We see that God is better than we thought and us much worse than we thought.

Three stages: I. Thought; II. Word; and III. Deed

- I. Thought**
- **Change of Mind** and Thinking (Romans 12:2). 'Metanoia' = change thinking.
 - Think God's way. Isaiah 64:6 & Philippians 3:8
 - When we recognize God's holiness, we will never think the same.
- II. Word**
- Expressed through Speech (1John 1:9)
 - **Confess sins specifically**, be accountable and responsible for them. Renounce them.
 - We are not the result of what has been done to us!
 - We are the **result of our choices** for what has been done to us.
- III. Deed**
- Demonstrated by Actions (Luke 3:8, Luke 19:8-9, Acts 26:20).
 - Prove repentance by your deeds as in the story of Zacchaeus.
 - Put the past right as far as possible even our religious acts (Isaiah 64:6).
 - Restitution leads to freedom.

To repent do three things:

- I. Be Serious**
- Where will your present way of life lead you (Luke 12:4-5)? Wages of sin is death.
 - Perish = when something cannot be used for the purpose for which it was made.
 - Hell is God's incinerator for perished people.
- II. Be Specific**
- Call out sins through guided conversation: what would I like to be free from?
 - Detailed list as the Holy Spirit brings awareness.
 - Immediate revelation to help others.
- III. Be Sensible**
- Must be moral not psychological guilt.
 - One cannot put everything right.

Hebrews 10:26-27, 'Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice that will cover these sins. ²⁷ There is only the terrible expectation of God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies.'

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN BIRTH

BAPTISM NOTES

3. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ

- It is easy to believe *that* than to be *in*! This implies **trust**.

I. Faith is Historical (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

- Based on **facts, not feelings**. It is evidenced based.
- Jesus died, was buried and was raised with a body.

II. Faith is Personal (John 6:28-29)

- Faith "in" Jesus, not just faith "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.

III. Faith is Verbal (Romans 10:9-13)

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

IV. 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.

V. 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.

How to help someone into Faith:

- Tell them the facts (evidence).
- Show them the Gospel - **Demonstrate** the Kingdom, **then Declare** it.
- Encourage them to pray in their own words.
- Teach them to set goals of faith.
- Urge them to 'go on' believing every day (stretch oneself).

Habakkuk 2:4, "Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God."

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN BIRTH

BAPTISM NOTES

4. Be Baptised in Water

Where does Baptism fit into salvation?

- What is God doing for a believer when they are baptised? Many see it just as a human act.
- 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) like in Exodus 29 and 40.
- Baptism brings what you are already in (repentance & faith) to **a climax and completion**.
- 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...." (Matthew 28:19).

- Baptise = drench, dip, dunk, deluge, soak, sink, swamp, saturate. Bible Society transliterates to English.
- 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 encounter.

Why was it done?

- Mark 16:16, Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved.
- John 3:5, You must be born out of water and out 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 Pharaoh's reach when they crossed the Red Sea, so when we are baptised we are delivered from the territory of Satan.
- We can say: "Satan, you attended our funeral. You have no more dominion over us."

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 similar to the partaking of communion. Both are sacraments = means of grace.

Romans 6:4, 'For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.'

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN BIRTH

BAPTISM NOTES

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, and being baptised in water.
- 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, we need filling with the Holy Spirit for the future.
- Passover is repeated in the believer's life when he/she is buried and raised in baptism.
- Pentecost is repeated in the believer's life when he/she is filled with the Holy Spirit.

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

- When on earth, you could receive Jesus (John 1:11-13). After 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 we are full of will come out of our 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! We cry out, '**Abba, Father!**' Through the Spirit of Adoption (Romans 8:15).

How to receive?

- **Seek Him** 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.
- Do not know what to expect and how to receive the gift (never know until you use it -TRY!)
- Fear for the loss of self-control - what will others think? National temperament—do not show emotions.
- False teaching - "Tongues are from Satan," or the "Supernatural is not for today".
- Evangelical tradition does not include gifts of the Spirit. Know Holy Scripture better than Holy Spirit.

John 3:5, 'Jesus said, "Most assuredly, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water & Spirit.'

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN BIRTH

BAPTISM NOTES

6. Saved at Last

We need to "unlearn" unbiblical teaching

- The typical "**sinner's prayer**" is inadequate as it only covers part of New Testament rebirth.
- Repentance should be specific and towards God.
- Faith involves believing in Jesus, not receiving Jesus.
- Baptism in water and receiving the Spirit is not mentioned.

God is in the business of Salvaging and Restoration (Recycling)

- Salvation is a **process** – we are BEING saved.
- What is it to be saved? Saved from what? Safe from hell (False); Salvaged from sins (True). Jesus came to **save us from our sins** and **sanctify us for service**. Saving us from hell is a bonus.
- Salvation is the Way – **being saved from, to and for something**. Jesus did not command us to get decisions, but to make disciples.
- Salvation is not Justification only but it should be a Justification leading to Sanctification. Jesus is seen as Saviour only but **Jesus is Saviour AND Lord**.
- Salvation is reduced to the minimum of escaping hell. We should desire everything God can give us to live right and be useful to God. God wants to give us **holiness here** and **happiness hereafter**.

The Good News of Christianity

- Not that we MUST live right, but that **we CAN live right**.
- When we repent and believe, God accepts and adopts us (justification), in order that we may live a holy life (sanctification) - 2 Timothy 1:6-7.

Process of full Salvation

- Justification - God accepts and forgives us .
- Sanctification - God makes us holy .
- Glorification - God gives us 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.

Philippians 1:6, 'And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.'

Pastor Keith & Jesse Padayachee

037-741NPO|CIPC 2004/000128/08

P.O.Box 561072 | Chatsworth | 4030

11 Ritz Road | Durban, South Africa | 4093

The **SON** Centre

