



HELP FOR THE NEW BELIEVER IN CHRIST

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HELP FOR THE NEW BELIEVER IN CHRIST

1. THE NEW BIRTH

As a new believer in Christ, no doubt, you are seeking to find your way in your new life and in Church life also. There are those who go to different Churches who call themselves Christians but they have no experience concerning conversion to Christ. These people have never been “born again”. We can only hope and pray that one day they will truly give their heart and lives to the Lord Jesus.

Concerning yourself, you have sincerely prayed and asked Jesus into your life, putting your faith in Him.

The day that we asked Christ into our lives, a number of things spiritually happened to us. You may not realise what happened to you spiritually and you may not even have feelings that expressed these truths. To understand what spiritually happened we have to go to the Word of God, the Bible.

Becoming a Christian is a result of God's favour upon us, something that we did not deserve but given to us by His love. By God's grace, we have come to the Saviour and God has made us His child. He has also justified us in the eyes of His holy law. A work of regeneration has happened. He has sanctified us and made us a saint, which means we have become a holy person, separated unto God. We have also become one with Christ and we are now members of His universal Church. What is more, God in the Person of the Holy Spirit has come to dwell within our hearts and lives. The Spirit's dwelling in us has made us into a holy Temple of God.

It would be good if you had some understanding regards to what we have just looked at but prior to that, let us look at the A.B.C. of the good news of our Lord Jesus. This good news will not only encourage our heart but it will also be of benefit when you explain to others your new faith in Christ.

2. A.B.C. OF THE GOSPEL

A. Stands for, "All have sinned". In Romans 3 v23 we read these words, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". This means that everyone in the world has fallen short of God's glory. No one is without sin and no one has the right to heaven. We all stand before God as a "sinner" unworthy of heaven. The word sinner means that we are outside of God's kingdom. In the days of Jesus, "sinners" were those forbidden the favour of the local synagogues and were looked upon as outsiders to the covenant of Israel. Outsiders were the sinners and these were prostitutes, tax collectors and all none Jewish people. What the religious Jewish people failed to understand was all peoples, Jews and Gentiles were sinner in the eyes of God.

B. Stands for, "Behold". In John 1 v29 we read these words, "...Behold, The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". Jesus is the answer to our problem of Sin and Death. He is our sacrificial Lamb to remove all our sin and shame. By beholding Him, looking to Him in faith for salvation we become clean by the Lamb's Blood from all our sin. He removes and forgives every sin that we have done and said. How powerful is that for you and I? It is all about His love and grace to us as individuals who have put their trust in the Lamb of God.

C. Stands for, "Come". We read these words in Matthew 11 v28 "come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". Jesus speaks these words to us all. We all need to make the decision to come to the Lord Jesus, to respond to His call, to come to Him and to do so with all of our hearts. There is an interesting reading in Romans 10 v 9-10 which reads, "...If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved v10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation". Those who come to Jesus and confess with their mouth their faith in Christ are saved from their sin and shame and from going into a lost eternity called hell. This is not a religious confession but from our hearts, we confess Him to be our personal Lord and Saviour.

This A.B.C. is a simple way to explain the Good News of our Lord Jesus. By memorising these A.B.C. verses, we can know the gospel and be able to explain to others our new faith in Christ.

3. THE BIBLE AND YOU

As a new Christian, you will be introduced to the Bible. It would be good if you had your own personal Bible. For those who know nothing about the Bible I would like to point out a few things. The Holy Bible is God's word to us. The Bible opens its self to those who are in a spiritual relationship with God. Those who have no conversion experience will find it difficult to get true spiritual blessing from it. God encourages and speaks to His people through His Word, so it is important to have a Bible. There are many things to discover in God's Word and God wants you to seek them out for yourself.

The Bible consists of 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. Although there are many books to the Bible the wonderful thing about them is that they all tell one great story, they interlock. The central theme and character of all these books is the Lord Jesus who was prophesied to come in the Old Testament and who came in the New Testament. The Bible contains about 33, 000 promises, of these about 365 relate to Christ's first coming into the world and another 1000 relate to His Second Coming into the world. The Bible tells us about the nature of God and the ways of God. It reveals to us His Father heart love, His will and about His people. The Holy Spirit will guide you, speak to you, teach you and show you the Lord Jesus. God's Spirit will encourage and help you in all your meditations and readings of His Word.

At the opening of your Holy Bible you will find a lists of the names of the books and where they are placed. Knowing how to locate a book in the Bible takes a little time. It would be good to spend a short time looking at the listed books and their abbreviations, e.g. Genesis, Gen and Exodus, Exo etc.

Resist the temptation to start reading the Bible from book one, Genesis. Take the book of Mark, found in the New Testament and make that your first book to read. Mark has sixteen chapters and is all about the doings of the Lord Jesus. After reading Mark, read the book of Ephesians, then John's Gospel and then John's three epistles near the back of the Bible. This will be your introduction to Bible meditations and readings. Take your time going through these books and in meditation allow them to speak to your heart in order to build up your faith. Take your Bible to Church with you and write down anything that speaks to you in the teachings or sermons given in the meetings. Pastors and preachers can help you to understand the Bible better and having a pen and paper will help you grasp the message well. If you have any questions concerning the Bible or what you hear in Church go and seek help from the Church minister.

4. PRAYER

Following Jesus by His example leads us to the fact that Jesus was a man of prayer. Jesus also taught His disciples how to pray. Through having a daily prayer life you will grow in your fellowship with God. Never rush into prayer with many demands. Follow the protocol, first thank and praise God and then pour out your heart to Him. Here are some Bible readings on this subject: Mk 1 v35; Matt 6 vs5-13; 1Thess 5 v17 and Eph 6 v18. The question when to read and when to meditate on the Bible and how long you spend in prayer is up to you. Most people like to start the day with devotions, which include looking into God's word as well as prayers. Turn to God in prayer and seek Him for what suits you in your day's devotions. We can pray and call upon God at any time as He works 24/7!

5. CHURCH LIFE

Jesus gave the example of always going to the place of worship each week (see Lk 4 v14). We are not followers of what Christians do or don't do in Church life, we have become followers of Jesus and what His example was to His people. The Church of the New Testament followed the example of the Lord Jesus regarding meeting together (see Acts 2 v42ff). Go to a Church and be faithful to that Church so that your spiritual life is consistent. Do not go from Church to Church for that will not be helpful to your spiritual growth. Church life is like being in a family that is committed to grow together in Christ. Make sure that the Church you are going to loves the Lord Jesus, is free in worship and gives good teaching on the Word of God.

Realise that your Church needs you because you have a set of gifts that would be a great encouragement to many other people. Seek to avail your gifts to the Church minister so that he can use you in the work of the Lord

Let us go on now to explain some of the words in our introduction.

6. BORN AGAIN: REGENERATION

In coming to Christ, the new believer receives a new spiritual nature; they are "Born Again". This new spiritual birth is known as 'Regeneration'. When Jesus spoke to a leading religious council member of the high court of Israel, He told him that he had to be "Born Again" in order to see the kingdom of heaven. Without being born again this leader, by the name of Nicodemus would not see the kingdom of God. Every Jewish religious person wanted to see the kingdom of God both on earth and in heaven. Without being born again, it is impossible to go to heaven and be part of its community.

I had no understanding of the meaning of being a "Born Again" as a new Christian. For me, several months had past and I had no knowledge of this term, "Born Again". All I knew was that I had come to give my heart and life to Christ. The day came when a new friend of mine explained to me that when I accepted the Lord Jesus into my life, I became born again of His Spirit, I became a child of God through a new spiritual birth.

In coming into Church life I came to realise that there was a Biblical language spoken amongst believers that was a little strange to the none Church goer. You, as a new Christian will appreciate this situation also in the weeks ahead.

Regeneration is all about the spiritual change that has come into our lives when coming to Christ. Regeneration has to do with New Birth. Let us look at John 1 v13 "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God". Our spiritual new birth was all about God's will for us. Going back to John 3 v3 we see that Jesus is talking about a second birth. Our first birth was natural but our second was spiritual as pointed out in verse six, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". Spiritual death was upon us in our natural birth but life in God comes with the new (see 1John 3 v14). In this new birth we have become partakers of the divine nature (see 2Peter 1 v4). Paul the Apostle writes in 2Cor 5 v17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new".

Regeneration is all about our change from the natural into the spiritual.

7. JUSTIFICATION

The meaning of the word “Justification” is “to declare righteous”. The work of Jesus on the cross made a way that you and I could come to a place in Him where God’s holy Law can no longer condemn us. We have an old saying here, Just-as-if-I’d-never –sinned. That puts it in a nut shell. Jesus legally before the Law of God placed us as one who has nothing to be condemned for. Those who are not justified have to face the punishment of their sins. Only those who have faith in Christ are justified before God. God, the judge of all flesh through faith in Christ justifies us. God has declared us to be righteous, instead of judgement comes imputed righteousness (see 2 Cor 5 v19 v21; Rom 3 v23-24; 5 v11 vs15-21) Our justification cost Jesus His submission to the death of the cross, He paid the price for our justification.

8. SANCTIFICATION

This word comes to us from the Hebrew, Qodesh and the Greek word Hagiazo. The Latin scholars used the word Sanctus and it is from the Latin that we get the word, sanctification. The old Anglo-Saxon’s word was “Halig”, it is from this old word that we have the words “hallow”, “Holiness” and “Holy”.

Sanctifications meaning is all about separation. A separation of a person or an object. It is something that is separate or put to one side for special use. In the Bible a mountain can be sanctified Exo 19 v23, or a person Exo 13 v2, or a field Lev 27 v16.

Our next understanding of this word has to do with cleansing. Whatever God cleanses is sanctified and set apart for His use. God has sanctified you because you put your trust in Christ and He has cleansed you in Jesus blood from all your sin and shame.

A third understanding of this word is about holiness. Holiness is all about growing into Christ’s likeness. It is about becoming more God like. The more we grow spiritually the more we become like the Lord Jesus. God has separated us to become His child and as the child learns of the Father-heart so the child becomes more and more like the Father.

It is important here that we come to realise that now that we are born again, we have two natures. We have our old nature and the new in Christ. Although we are all new spiritually, yet our mind, emotions, what we call our soul is far from perfect and open to temptation and even to sin. We have a problem, for although we are sanctified and made holy we still at times fall into sin which is like a contradiction to who we are in God. This problem it to do with our two natures which war against each other. Paul talks about our “old man” in Rom 6 v6; Eph 4 v22 and Col 3 v9. In Romans 7 v18 Paul talks about “my flesh” speaking about the negative side of our earthly nature. Paul also expresses the same in his words “carnal mind” in Rom 8 v7 and in the “body of death”, which is our flesh. Concerning the new man in Christ Paul uses words like, “new man” (Eph 4 v24; Col 3 v10), “inner man” (Rom 7 v22 cp 2Cor 4 v16; Eph 3 v16). Our “old man” longs to satisfy the flesh in us but our “new man” longs after the things of the Spirit (see Rom 8 v1, vs4-5; Col 3 v10; Eph 4 v24).

Now that the Lord Jesus has saved us by His grace we are now called to follow Jesus by living not in our old ways of thinking and doing but in the new way of His Spirit. God's great work and His blessings come to us and flow through our new nature. We put down the old nature and we live by the power of His grace to lift up daily our new nature. Paul addresses our old nature and tells us to, "mortify our members" (Rom 8 v13; Col 3 v5) to, "put off our old self" (Eph 4 v22; Col 3 vs8-9) to, "recon that the "old is crucified" Rom 6 v6 ; Gal 5 v24) "to be dead to sin", (Rom 6 v11). To the new nature he addresses it so, "put on the new man" (Eph 4 v24; Col 3 v10) to, "to walk in the newness of life" (Rom 6 v4) to, "serve in newness of Spirit.

You and I want to please God and walk and talk and do in this new life but things within us cause us to trip up. When we trip up and fall in to disobedience we need to ask the Lord to forgive us and He will, if we are true in heart about it. You will also come to realise that Satan wants you to fall down again and again and call you an unfaithful hypocrite. He is a master at condemnation, guilt trips and feelings of rejection. Do not listen to Satan because Jesus and His Blood has the power to forgive and remove all our sins. Remember that you have someone who lives within your new nature who is your guide and helper, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows that you are not perfect of yourself but you are in Jesus. The more mature you become in your new faith, the more you will become like the Lord Jesus. Remember, in times of temptations, you are not a failure, you are a child of God and you have power to resist all evil.

A Christian who lives to do God's will is a spiritual Christian but a Christian who wants to do his/her own will and live in the old nature is called a "carnal Christian". The carnal Christian will never be strong enough to overcome temptation nor live a holy life. However, the spiritual Christian relies on Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to give them victory over sin and Satan.

It all boils down to, our will. Do we want to live holy lives day by day or do we want to do things our way. By the surrender of our will, a living sacrifice, we honour God and become mature in the things of God (see Rom 8 vs 1-17; Rom 12 vs 1-2). At conversion we become sanctified, after conversion sanctification is worked out by the way we live in Christ, showing to the world that we are living a new life in the power of His resurrection.

Let Christ rule your life and let your life be surrendered to Him. Give Him your married life or your desires for marriage. Give Him your business and your finances, let Him have control. Let Christ have your work and your career. Let Him have all your days. By giving our all to Him we shall be blessed and prosper in the Lord. Give also your problems and your needs in prayer because He cares for you.

9. CONCERNING WATER BAPTISM

Water Baptism is a symbolic act, which identifies us with Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Only believers knowing Jesus as their own personal Saviour are baptised. This act does not save a person from sin, death and a lost eternity. What saves us is faith in Christ and being cleansed in His Blood does that. The thief on the cross was not baptised nor was Cornelius prior to salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, yet both belonged to Jesus by faith only. The act of water baptism, which is carried out in public, shows to all that we are following the Lord Jesus and His example.

When in obedience we go under the waters of baptism we are acting out the death of our old life with its sin and self will. As we come up out of the waters, it symbolises our new life with its will to follow the Lord Jesus. The old is buried in our going down, the new is raised in our coming up.

Some places in the Bible to read concerning water baptism:

John the Baptist Mk 1 v5.

Day of Pentecost Acts 2 v41.

Samaritans Acts 8 v12.

Paul's baptism Acts 9 v18.

Cornelius Acts 10 v 47.

Lydia's house Acts 16 v15.

Philippian Jailer Acts 16 v33.

Corinthians Acts 18 v8.

Ephesians Acts 19 v5.

10. End comments

As a new believer in Christ, I want you to pray about water baptism. Nobody is going to demand it of you and nobody is going to rush you to be baptised in water. When you are ready for water baptism and you want to talk it through, go and see your Pastor.

We come to an end of this study for new believers. If you would like to know more or go over any part of these subjects with someone then please contact, the Riverway International Church on this website.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Neil.

