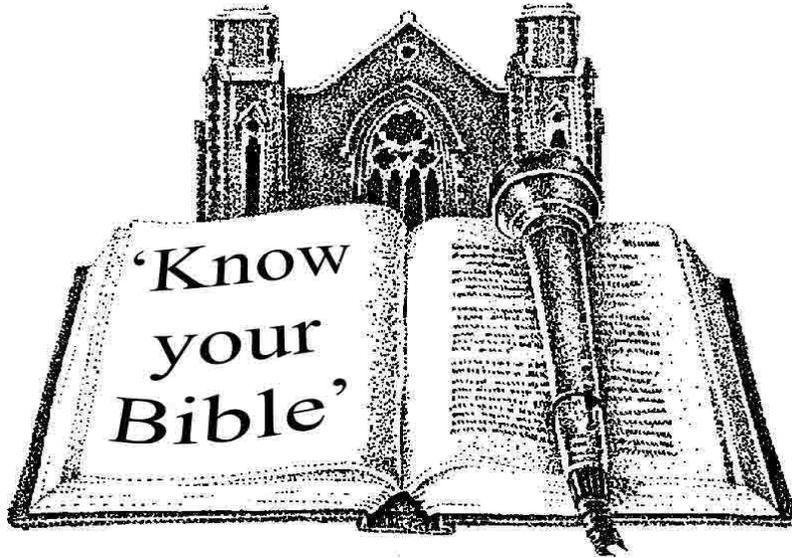


Back to Basics

**The fundamental teachings of the historic
Biblical faith explained simply and with
applications.**

Study Notes by Stuart Olyott



Back to Basics

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1. The Bible (i)

1. What it is

- "the divine library" - 1 book - 66 separate books - 2 Testaments.
- nearly 40 authors over a period of 1'600 years.
- speaking of the world from before it began to after it has ended.

The Old Testament

- Genesis: creation of world - entrance of sin - flood - Israel begins.
- Exodus to Esther: history of Israel up to 400 years before Christ.
- Job to Song of Solomon: wonderful poetry and wisdom.
- Isaiah to Malachi: prophetic: messages from God about now and later.

The New Testament

- 4 Gospels: presenting the life of the lord Jesus Christ.
- Acts: the infant church, and the life of the great apostle Paul.
- Romans to Jude: letters to individuals & churches, by Paul and others.
- Revelation: the history of the church in 7 parallel visions.
- 66 books, yet one main subject - Christ!
- The Old Testament looks forward: predictions and prophecies concerning Him.
- The NT looks backward to His coming, and forward to His second coming.

2. How it was written

- the Bible is God's book, but God caused it to be written by men.
- each book has two authors - the Holy Spirit and the human author.
- so the Bible is human as well as divine. 2 Peter 1:21.
- the human side of the Bible is easily seen.
- for example, different styles of writing (Isaiah/Amos : Luke/Mark).
- Luke even had to do some research before writing. Luke 1:3.
- sometimes Paul does not finish his sentences. Romans 8:12-13.
- Daniel did not understand everything he had written, Daniel 12:8-9,
- Peter says some of Paul's writings are hard to understand. 2 Peter 3:16.
- the Bible also records the sins and errors of man. Genesis 9:20-21.
- and yet the Bible **is** the Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
- and the **only** written revelation which God has given us. Revelation 22:18-19.

3. Why we need it

- God reveals Himself in creation. Psalm 19:1. Romans 1:19-20.
 - also our consciences tell us about Him. Ecclesiastes 3:11. Romans 2:14-16.
 - but if we are to know any more, we need **special** revelation.
 - this God has given us in the Bible. John 17:17.
 - He has not told us there everything there is to know about God and His ways. Deuteronomy 29:29. John 21:25.
 - but the Bible contains all that we **need** to know. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
 - here are some other reasons for a written Bible: Luke 1:3-4. Matthew 4:4, 7, 10. Romans 15:4. Isaiah 8:20.
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2. The Bible (ii)

- We have learned what the Bible is, how it was written, why we need it.
- Now we consider :-

1. The Old Testament as God's Word

- When the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, there was a known collection of books called "the Scriptures" which was identical to our Old Testament.
- Jesus accepted these 39 books, and no others, as God's Word.
- this is what He was referring to in John 10:35, 17:17.
- these were the books He studied carefully and memorized.

- the Old Testament governed His life :
 - the beginning of His ministry. Luke 4:16-17 (Isaiah 61).
 - His titles
 - Son of God. Mark 8:29, 14:61 (Psalm 2:7, 110:1)
 - Son of Man. Mark 14:62 (Daniel 7:13-14).
 - His death. Luke 22:37, 18:31, Mark 14:21.
 - His resurrection. Luke 24:46 (Is. 52:13, 53:10. Psalm 110:1, 16:8-11).

- the Old Testament governed His teaching.
 - He carried its teaching to a new level. Matthew 5:27-28 (Exodus 20:14).
 - covenant. Mark 14:24 (Exodus 24:8, Jeremiah 31:31).
 - ransom. Mark 10:45 (Psalm 49:7).

- Jesus saw the Old Testament as inspired by God.
 - He taught that behind the human author God Himself was its Author.
 - for examples, see Mark 12:36, 7:13, Matthew 22:31, 19:4-5, 15:4.

- Jesus saw the Old Testament as always right and never wrong.
 - for examples, see Mark 12:24, John 10:34, Matthew 4:4,7,10.
 - and look what Jesus taught about Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4-5), Noah and the ark (Luke 17:26-27), Lot's wife (Luke 10:12, 17:32), Jonah and the fish (Matthew 12:39-41).

If you have a different view of the Old Testament, you are not following the Lord Jesus Christ!

2. The New Testament as God's Word

- Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would equip His apostles to record and interpret the facts about Him and His work. John 16:12-14.
- it was the apostles who were given this important task, John 15:26, 14:26
- the apostles became the foundation of the church. Ephesians 2:20, Revelation 21:14.
- they had Christ's own authority. Matthew 10:40, John 20:21, Matthew 28:18-20.
- the words of the prophets and the apostles can be put on the same level. 1 Peter 1:11-12, 2 Peter 3:2.
- an apostle's writing is Scripture. 2 Peter 3:16 (see 2 Peter 1:21).
- an apostle's teaching has the same authority as Scripture. 1 John 1:1-5, 2 John 10, Galatians 1:6-9-
- where apostolic teaching is rejected, there can be no Christian fellowship. 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 1 Timothy 6:3,5, 1 Corinthians 14:37-38.
- it is the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13), the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 12). the Word of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13).
- this was the view of the Christian leaders following the apostles.

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- they said "the Scripture says" as much of the NT as of the OT.
- "We accept the apostles as the Lord Himself" (Serapion of Antioch, 180).
- so it was that false writings were quickly rejected by the early churches and the NT books accepted as Scripture, without any council deciding it!
- Scripture is its own witness. The early church recognised this,
- The Holy Spirit has put His seal upon the NT.
- It is God-breathed Scripture.

3. What we should do with the Bible

- read it. Acts 8:28.
 - work hard at understanding it. 2 Timothy 2:15.
 - memorise it. Psalm 119:11.
 - meditate on it. Psalm 1:2, 119:97.
 - use it to test all we hear. Acts 17:11, 1 John 4:1.
 - apply it. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, James 1:22.
 - seek the Lord Jesus Christ in it. Luke 24:25-27, John 5:39, Acts 8:35, 2 Timothy 3:15.
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3. God: His existence, being and attributes

1. The existence of God: How do we know that God exists?

6 key texts

- Psalm 14:1
- Hebrews 11:6b
- Romans 1:19-20
- Psalm 119:130
- 2 Corinthians 4:6
- 1 John 1:5-7

2. The being of God: What is God in Himself?

- He is a Spirit (John 4:24) and therefore invisible (1 Timothy 6:15-16).
- However, He is a personal Spirit - with names - more than one human being has become His 'friend' (Exodus 33:11, James 2:23). He speaks, and can be known.
- He is not limited in any way and nothing can be compared to Him (Isaiah 40:18).
- so far as space is concerned. He is everywhere (Jeremiah 23:24).
- so far as time is concerned. He is eternal (Psalm 90:2, Exodus 3:14).
- so far as knowledge is concerned. He knows everything (Psalm 147:5).
- so far as power is concerned. He does whatever He chooses (Psalm 115:3, Daniel 4:35).

3. The attributes of God: What is God like?

- He is holy. 1 John 1:5, Isaiah 6:3.
 - He is righteous. Psalm 145:17.
 - He is loving. 1 John 4:8, 16, Exodus 34:16.
 - He is good. Psalm 145:9, 119:68, 86:5.
 - He is wise. Daniel 2:20, Romans 11:33-36.
 - He is incomprehensible. Isaiah 55:8-9.
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4. God : The Holy Trinity

Only God understands God.

But this is what He has revealed in His Word:-

There is only one God : and God is one

- Jeremiah 23:24
- Deuteronomy 4:35
- Deuteronomy 6:4

What a mystery - there is more than one who is God!

- Genesis 1:1, 1:26-27, 3:22, 11:5-7, Isaiah 6:8
- Exodus 3:1-6
- there is more than one who is God - but how many?
- even the OT gives us clues - Numbers 6:22-27, Isaiah 6:3.
- this was preparation for the truth which the New Testament reveals clearly.....

The Father is God

- Matthew 6:9

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, is God

- 1 John 5:20
- Colossians 2:9

The Holy Spirit is God

- Acts 15:28.
- Matthew 28:19.
- Acts 5:3-4.
- Matthew 12:31-32.

There are three distinct Persons who are God

- there are three who are God, and each can say "I", but none of them says "we" - John 12:28, 17:4, Acts 13,: 2.
- "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son" (Westminster Confession of Faith: 2:3).

- in the relations of these three persons within the Godhead, there is priority, but not superiority.
- these relations are reflected in the way God acts (creation : salvation)
- this incomprehensible mystery is without analogy.
- and we must beware of falling into error - for example, tritheism, monarchianism, modalism.

A truth to live by

- to believe - John 17:3, Matthew 28:19.
- to love - salvation : justification : adoption.
- to live by - come to this God;
- pray to Him;
- have a new respect for His Word'.

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"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
World without end. Amen."

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5. God: His sovereignty

Is God in control of everything?

- God controls all things, everywhere, all the time. 1 Timothy 6:15. Psalm 103:19, Ephesians 1:11.
- It follows that He controls nature. Psalm 148:7-8, 15-18, Jonah 1:4, 4:6, 8.
- It follows that He controls all creatures. Jonah 1:17, 2:10, 4:7, Matthew 10:29.
- It follows that He controls men :
 - even evil men. Genesis 50:20, Judges 2:14-15, Acts 2:23.
 - even the eternal destiny of each person. Romans 9:14-24.
- It follows that He controls nations. Isaiah 10:5-7, Ezra 1:1.
- It follows that He controls history. Acts 17:26, 4:27-28.
- It follows that He controls all circumstances. Amos 3:6, 1 Kings 22:28, 34.
- It follows that He controls all that happens to His people. Romans 8:28.
- It follows that He controls even Satan. Job 1:12, 2:6, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

What must we remember as we think about this truth?

- God's control does not conflict with human responsibility.
 - He is in no way involved in human sin. Deuteronomy 30:15-20.
 - The blame for sin belongs entirely to the sinner, Luke 22:22, Acts 2:23.
- We cannot grasp God's ways. Isaiah 55:8-9, Psalm 145:3.
- He does what He pleases and is not answerable to us. Psalm 115:3, Daniel 4:34-35, Romans 9:20.
- His sovereignty guarantees that He will punish all evil doers. Psalm 92:5-9.
- His sovereignty guarantees that nothing will separate His people from Him and His love. Romans 8:31-39.
- We who are believers should, then, be content in all circumstances, knowing that we always have **Him**, Job 1:21, 2:10, Philippians 4:11-13, Hebrews 13:5.
- And our daily refrain should be Psalm 145:3

"Great is the LORD
and greatly to be praised :
And his greatness is unsearchable."

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6. Man

Something to remember

In the Bible, we find man in 5 different conditions:-

- on earth, as created,
- on earth, fallen.
- on earth, redeemed.
- in eternity, damned.
- in eternity, glorified.

This said, here are 6 key facts

1. We are here because God created the world, and He created man to inhabit it.
Genesis 1:26-2:7.

2. Man was created to possess the earth.

- to make it serve him. Genesis 1:
- to rule all other creatures²⁸. Genesis 1:28.
- to cultivate God's creation. Genesis 2:15.
- to enjoy God's creation. Psalm 104:14-15.

3. Man was created to know, serve and enjoy God.

- he was made in God's image, and is thus unique. Genesis 1:27.
- he was made to have fellowship with God. Genesis. 3:9. Luke 10:27.
- he was created to live in dependence on God. Matthew 4:4.
- he was to obey God. Genesis 2:16-17, 3:13, Ecclesiastes 12:13.
- he is not only a physical creature, but has an eternal soul. Genesis. 2:7, Matthew 4:4, Mark 8:36.

4. When man rebelled against God, he lost his way.

- he is like a sheep gone astray. Isaiah 53:6.
- he worships created things more readily than God. Romans 1:25.
- yet something inside him still speaks to him about God. Romans 1:19, 21, 2:15, Acts 17:27.
- his greatest need is to be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians. 5:20.
- and he may be - through what Christ has done; 2 Corinthians. 5:17-21.

5. God is angry, yet patient, with rebellious man.

- His anger shows itself even now. Romans 1:18-32.
- Final judgement will certainly come, and yet does not fall on men just yet. Romans 2:1-16.
- God thus gives men the opportunity to repent. 2 Peter 3:9.

6. God tells redeemed man why he is here on earth.

- we are here to know God. John 17:3.
 - we are here to please God. 2 Corinthians 5:9.
 - we are here to do His will, Romans 12:1-2.
 - we are here to be made more like Christ. 2 Corinthians. 3:18.
 - we are here to extend His kingdom. Mark 16:15.
 - we are here **to glorify God**. 1 Corinthians. 6:20, 10:31, 1 Peter 4:11.
 - we look forward to enjoying Him for ever.
 - Psalm 73:25-26, 1 Peter 1:8, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
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7. Sin

What sin is

- Sin is disobeying or not conforming to God's law in any way. 1 John 3:4.

The first sin

- the full historical account of this is found in Genesis chapters 1-3.
- God had made it clear to Adam and Eve what was right and what was wrong.
- they were both **free** and **able** to choose either the path of obedience unto life, or the path of disobedience unto death.
- they rejected God's definition of sin and followed Satan's: "Nothing is wrong except what harms us."
- this was a terrible crime because (1) they went against the command of the holy God; (2) they did so when they were both free and able to do right; (3) they knew what the consequences would be.

The first sin ruined us all

- this is made clear in Romans 5:12-21.
- **we** sinned in Adam and fell with him in his first disobedience.
- there is unity between Adam and his natural descendants.
- he chose the wrong and left us all guilty, although we were not yet in existence.
- it is God who ordained that we should stand in this relationship to Adam.
- if this does not seem fair, we should remember :-
 - i. Our daily behaviour reveals that we approve of Adam's sin and are partakers of it in the fullest sense.
 - ii. We can accomplish nothing in objecting to this - the fact remains that we are guilty, sinful and miserable.
 - iii. The representative principle which ruins us is the very principle that saves us – all who are united to the Lord Jesus Christ are saved by His work.

How sinful our fallen condition is!

- we are guilty of Adam's first sin, as we have seen. Romans 5:19.
- we have no righteousness to commend us to God. Romans 3:10.
- our whole nature is corrupted and polluted (Original sin).
 - Genesis 6:5 shows us that our wickedness is inward, great, continual, universal, total.
 - yet we are not as wicked as it is possible to be, being held back by conscience (Romans 2:15), government (Romans 13:1-5), the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15), and many other factors - family, education, society...

- this means that we cannot do **anything** that God considers good, holy and righteous. Genesis 8:21. Psalm 58:3, Romans 3:12.
We are still **free** to choose one path or the other, but, because of our corrupt nature, we are only **able** to go the way of wickedness. Job 14:4, Jeremiah 13:23, 17:9.

How miserable our fallen condition is!

- all mankind has lost communion with God, and life is empty. Genesis 3:8, 24, Ecclesiastes 1:2.
 - we have brought His anger and curse upon us. Ephesians 2:3, Romans 1:18, Galatians 3:10.
 - our earthly life knows all sorts of misery. Job 5:7.
 - we must all die. Hebrews 9:27.
 - and everlasting punishment awaits us all. Matthew 3:12, 8:12. 25:46, Mark 9:48, Revelation 14:10-11.
 - how glad we are to know that there is a Saviour for sinners! 1 Timothy 1:15.
 - this is **good news** - this is the **gospel!**
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8. The Lord Jesus Christ (i): who He came for

- we have learned of our sin and misery.
- but God's love and power have provided a way of escape;

Unconditional election

- Out of the total human race. God has chosen definite people to be saved.
- He chose them out of sheer kindness: not because of anything in them.
- He chose them to be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ alone.
- He chose them in eternity.
- John 6:37-39, 15:16, Acts 13:48, Ephesians 1:4-5, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, Romans 8:29-30, 9:6-26, 11:5-7.

Some things to remember...

- God, being God, is free to save who He wants, Matthew 20:15.
- by definition, there can be no injustice in God. Romans 9:19-23.
- all the elect are brought to glory by calling (Romans. 8:30), so this truth does not stifle evangelism : in fact, it encourages it.
- nobody whatever is saved without repentance and faith. Your responsibility is to turn from your sins to the Saviour, and to stop thinking that you will be saved or lost "no matter what I do."
- to deny unconditional election is to deny what God's Word says.
- there may be many reasons for this, but they add up to sinful rebellion.

The everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13:20)

- the people whom the Father chose; the people for whom Christ died; the people whom the Holy Spirit calls - these are not 3 peoples, but one and the **same** people.
- John 6:37-44, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, Romans 8:28-35.
- there is **agreement** in the Godhead concerning these people.
- the Persons of the Trinity **covenanted** together to do this great work of grace. It is a covenant of grace.
- once this is understood, lots of Scriptures make sense.
- for example : Hebrews 13:20, Isaiah 42:6, Psalm 89:3, Luke 22:29, John 10:18, John 17:4, 6, 9, 12, 24.
- **Adam** represented us in **the covenant of works**, and failed. So we are all damned.
- **Christ** represented His people in **the covenant of grace**. He purchased their redemption, as He had covenanted to do. So all in Christ are saved.

Our reaction

- these truths are awe-inspiring. We should humbly worship.
 - what mercy! God saves wicked, miserable sinners! What cause for thanks and for joy,
 - every one of us should make his calling and election sure. 2 Peter 1:10.
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9. The Lord Jesus Christ (ii) : His Person and Work

Whenever we think of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must remember 1-2-2-3.

One Person

Our Lord has known many changes. But nothing about **Him** has changed. There is only one Christ. (Philippians. 2:5-11, Hebrews 13:8).

Two distinct natures

Our Lord was (John 1:1), is (Matthew 1:23, Colossians 2:9), and always will be (Romans 9:5) the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God.

Conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:26-43), He took to Himself a real body (Hebrews. 2:14.17) and a reasoning soul (Luke 2:40-52, Matthew. 26:38), and so became man (John 1:14). He is still a man (Acts 7:56, 1 Timothy .2:5) and always will be (Acts 2:22, 33).

He thus has two distinct natures, united to each other "without conversion, composition or confusion."

Two states

His humiliation

Born as a man - a low position - subject to the law - suffering miseries - experiencing God's anger - cursed death on the cross - buried - remaining under death's power for a time.

His exaltation

Resurrection! - Ascension!! - Session!!! - Second coming!!!!

Three offices

	Prophet	Priest	King
MAN as he was (Adam)	Knowledge	Righteousness	Holiness
Man as he is (fallen)	Ignorance	Guilty	Sinfulness
ISRAEL	Moses and the prophets	Aaron and his household	David and his household
CHRIST (on earth)	Word Himself Teaching	His one final sacrifice for sins	His claims His Power
CHRIST (in heaven)	His Spirit inspired His intercession Bible & applies it	His intercession	All authority in heaven & earth
CONVERSION	The mind is taught 'the law & the gospel	The conscience is made aware of its need of righteousness	The will is activated to choose and accept Christ.
GROWTH IN GRACE (A true church)	Faithful preaching of God's Word	Proper administration of both sacraments	Exercise of Scriptural discipline

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10. The Holy Spirit (i); His Person and Work

Who He is

He is unique

- there is but one Spirit. Ephesians 4:4.

He is a Person - not simply an influence or a power

- He is a "he", not an "it". John 16:7-8, 13-14.
- He is spoken of as a person - the Helper. John 14:15-18, 26.
- He intercedes, is grieved, and can be lied to. Romans 8:26-27, Ephesians 4:30, Acts 5:3-4.

He is God

- He is called God. Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.
- He has the attributes of God. 1 Corinthians 2:10, Hebrews 9:14.
- He does the works of God. Psalm 104:30, Romans 8:11.
- He may be blasphemed. Mark 3:28-30.

He is the Third Person of the Trinity

- this is clear from Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Corinthians 13:14.
- sent by the Son from the Father, He acts for both of them. John 15:26-27, 14:16, 26, 16:7

What He does

Agent of creation

It is He who brought order out of chaos (Genesis 1:2), adorned the heavens (Job 26:13) and gave life to man (Job 33:4, Genesis 2:7).

Author of Scripture

He inspired them (2 Timothy 3:16), moving the authors to write the Word of God (2 Peter 1:29-21, Mark 12:36, Acts 1:16).

Active in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ

By His power the virgin conception took place (Luke 1:35, Matthew 1:18-20).

The Spirit descended upon Him in a special way at His baptism (Mark 1:10).

He led Christ during His ministry (Mark 1:12) and it was in His power that Jesus worked and preached (Luke 4:14, 18, Matthew. 12:28, Acts 10:38).

Christ possessed the Spirit in a measureless manner (John 3:34). At last, it was by the Holy Spirit that Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice to God (Hebrews 9:14), and it was the Spirit who raised Him from the dead (Romans 1:4, 8:11).

Agent of God's new creation in Christ - the church

It is He who raises up gospel preachers (Acts 13:2, 4) and gives power to their preaching (1 Thessalonians 1:5, 1 Peter 1:12).

He is the author of the new birth (John 3:5-6) and brings people into the spiritual dimension and into union with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).

He shows men and women their need of salvation (John 16:8-11), reveals Christ to them (John 16:13-14, 15:26) and brings them to acknowledge Christ's Lordship (1 Corinthians 12:3).

He binds believers together in one body in spiritual unity (Ephesians 4:3-4), raises up elders (Acts 20:28) and manifests Himself in, some particular way in each believers, for the building up of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

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11. The Holy Spirit and the individual Christian

Our Lord Jesus Christ sends the Holy Spirit from the Father into the life of every elect person (John 15:26, 16:7). The Spirit is thus quite often called "the Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9).

1. He brings about the new birth

This is the miracle by which a person's whole nature is changed by the Scriptures (1 Peter 1:23, James 1:18). It is life from the dead (John 5:24, Ephesians 2:1-10) and is the Holy Spirit's work (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26-27, John 3:5-8, Titus 3:5). It does not come from any decision by man (John 1:12-13) and we cannot even fully understand it (John 3:8).

2. He lives within the believer

He does this for ever (John. 14:16-18). This is the mark of a true Christian (Romans 8:9). The Christian's body is the temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20).

3. He assures the believer that he is God's child

It is He who moves us to come to God as our Father (Romans. 8:15-17, Galatians. 4:6-7), convincing us of our union with Christ (1 John. 3:24, 4:13).

4. He sanctifies the believer

Sin grieves the Holy Spirit (Ephesians. 4:30). He empowers the believer to progressively kill off those things in his life which displease God (Romans 8:13, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2) by inwardly strengthening him (Ephesians. 3:16). In this way He moulds him increasingly into the likeness of Christ (Galatians 5:16-26, 2 Corinthians 3:18).

5. He helps the believer to pray

All real prayer is "in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 1:20). He helps the believer to pray at all times (Ephesians 2:18, 6:18). He stirs up prayer by the love He gives us for fellow-believers (Romans 15:30). Those deep desires which we cannot put into words in prayer, come from Him (Romans 8:26).

6. He enables the believer to understand the Bible

He reveals to the believer things which would otherwise be hidden from him (1 Corinthians 2:6-16), showing him Christ (John 15:26) and guiding him into all the truth (John 16:13-15, 17:17).

7. He gives to the believer spiritual experiences

He leads him to worship God (John, 4:24, Philippians 3:3), gives him a sense of oneness with other Christians (2 Corinthians 13:14, Philippians. 2:1, Ephesians 4:4), makes God's love flood his heart (Romans 5:5), communicates joy (Romans. 14:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:6), and fills him with hope (Romans 15:13, Galatians 5:5).

8. He accompanies the believer in witness

He gives him power to fulfill the Lord's commission to evangelise (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:4, 8) and gives to Christ-centred proclamation its convincing quality (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

9. He equips the believer to serve God

He gives the right gift or gifts for all varieties of service, and so enables every Christian to fulfill a useful purpose within the church (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11-13).

10. He fits the believer for heaven

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The Christian is reborn by the Spirit to an incorruptible inheritance (1 Peter 1:4).
The Spirit is the pledge that he will arrive there (Ephesians 1:13-14)
and is transforming him, to fit him for glory (2 Corinthians 3:18).

He will raise his body from the dust to go there (Romans 8:11).

How wonderful the Holy Spirit's ministry is!

By persistent prayer, we may know more of His work in our lives. (Luke 11:9-13).

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12. Justification by faith

- this truth is the very centre of the gospel (Romans 1:16-17).
- it is "the article of a standing or falling Church" (Martin Luther).
- it answers the question : "How can a guilty sinner be righteous before God?"

Justification is a declaration ...

- it is something the sinner is **said** to be; not something **done** to him.
- Deuteronomy 25:1, when a judge justifies someone, he is declaring that innocent person to be righteous. The opposite is condemnation. (See also Proverbs 17:15).
- But we are guilty (Romans 3:23). How can the righteous Lord declare a **sinner** to be righteous?
- the answer lies in imputation ...

... made possible by imputation

- "Imputation" means that God has reckoned or credited to one person what originally belonged to another person.
- for instance, the sin of Adam is imputed or 'put to the account' of all Adam's race. We receive from him. He receives nothing from us.
- In the case of our Lord Jesus Christ and His elect people, there is a double imputation:-
- my sin is put to His account, and He is treated as if **He** had sinned **my** sin. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. (Isaiah 53:5-6).
- His perfect righteousness is put to my account. God treats me as if I had never sinned. I am treated as if **I** had lived **Christ's** perfect life. Read 2 Corinthians. 5:21 again. (Philippians 3:9).

It is GOD who justifies (Romans. 8:33)

- **He** declares us righteous,
- He does it freely, by His grace (Romans. 3:24, 5:17).
- do not think that it is your **faith** which makes you righteous. Faith is not a "good work" that pleases God in such a way that He considers it "just as good" as obeying Him perfectly. Faith is not the ground of righteousness.
- the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and **that alone**, is the ground of righteousness (Romans. 3:24). There is no other sin-bearer. Faith (in Him!!) is an **instrument only**. It is the hand that God gives to us, by which we receive His righteousness. It is **not** the source of that righteousness (Romans 3:20-26, Ephesians 2:8-9).

Three other important points

1. Justification is an act (complete in a moment) not a process (which takes time). Imputation takes place the moment you believe. You are justified, or you are not. And you cannot be unjustified! You are right with God for ever, and free from wrath and condemnation (Romans 8:1, Titus 3:7).

2. Nobody is justified until he repents and believes the gospel. It is God's plan to justify His elect people. But they are not **in fact** justified until they are united to Christ in effectual calling. Until then, they are lost (Galatians. 2:16, Colossians. 1:21-22). But the moment they **do** believe, they are justified (Acts 13:38-39, Romans. 3:22).

3. No law-keeping is necessary. We are justified by faith alone. But the faith that justifies is never alone. It is **always** accompanied by good works (James 2:26). These works do not commend us to God. They are the fruit of faith (Ephesians 2:8-10).

All those who God justifies He sanctifies. There are no exceptions (1 Corinthians 6:11). They cannot, and do not, live as they used to.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the law no flesh shall be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

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13. The Church

What the church is

- not a building, organisation, denomination. God's Word never speaks of it in that way.
- but the whole company of **people** chosen by God the Father (2 Thessalonians 1:1, 2:13), redeemed by God the Son (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:25), called and in dwelt by God the Holy Spirit (Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 12:13).
- it is holy, because these people are set apart for God. (1 Corinthians 1:2).
- **universal**, because all believers of all times belong to it. (Ephesians 5:25).
- **apostolic**, because all who are saved are saved through the gospel which the apostles preached. (Galatians. 1:6-10).
- **one**, because God has only one people. (Ephesians 4:4-6).
- **local**, because the gathering of believers in a given area is a microcosm of the church (1 Corinthians 1:2, 11:16, 22).

Christ and the church

- many magnificent pictures illustrate the relationship which exists between the Lord Jesus Christ and the church. The best known of these are those of a:–
 - body (1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Romans 12:3-8).
 - bride (Ephesians 5: 25-27).
 - building (Ephesians 2:19-22. 1 Peter 2:4-6).

A closer look at the local church

- God's Word gives us a detailed picture of the local church which is the mother of all local churches. (Acts 2:41-47).
- God's Word reveals that a properly organised local church has elders, and, if necessary, deacons. (1 Timothy. ch. 3, Philippians 1:1, Acts 20:17-38, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- God's Word shows that church discipline is part and parcel of local church life: -
 - admonition (Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1),
 - suspension (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15),
 - excommunication (1 Corinthians. 5:1-13).
- God's Word teaches that Christ's church and Sunday are inseparable. (Luke 24:1-8, John 20:19-20, 26-29, Acts 2:1, 20:7).
- God's Word underlines the supreme importance of the local church:
 - each local church is a golden lamp stand (Revelation 1:20).
 - the local church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

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14. The future

Death

- death is the end of physical life by the separation of body and soul. Ecclesiastes 12:7, James 2:26.
- it is not seine-thing natural. Romans 5:12,17.
- but for the believer it has lost its sting. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57.
- immediately after death the unconverted go into irreversible, conscious torment. Luke 16:23, 28, 2 Peter 2:9.
- believers go into conscious glory, with Christ. Luke 16:19-31, 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23, Revelation 6:9.

The second coming of Christ

- Jesus often spoke about this. Matthew 24:36-44, 26:64, John 14:3.
- the apostles too. Philippians 3:20-21, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 9:28.
- but first will come the great apostasy and Antichrist. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12.
- **When** is Christ coming? No-one knows. Matthew 24:36, 44.
- **How** is He coming? Bodily, personally, gloriously. Acts 1:11, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 10.
- **Why** is He coming? To raise the dead, to judge and end the world, thus bringing in the final age. John 5:28-29, Acts 17:31.

The resurrection

- at the return of Christ, all the dead will be raised up. John 5:28-29, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- a bodily resurrection. Acts 24:15, 1 Corinthians 15:35-58, Philippians 3:20-21.
- this resurrection will coincide with the return of Christ and the end of the world, and will precede the final judgement. John 5:27-29, Acts 17:31, 1 Corinthians 15:23, Revelation 20:11-15, 22:12.

The last judgement

- the Bible speaks very clearly about this. Psalm 96:13, Ecclesiastes 12:14, Matthew 25:31-46, Hebrews 9-.27, 1 Peter 4:5.
- the Judge will be Christ himself. Matthew. 25:31-32, Acts 10:42, 2 Corinthians. 5:10
- every individual of the human race will be there. Ecclesiastes 12:14, Matthew 12:36-37, Romans 14:10, 2 Timothy 4:1
- the standard of judgement will be the revealed will of God. Romans 2:12-16.

The final state of the wicked

- they will be sent to a place of punishment. Matthew 13:42, Revelation 20:14-15.
- there they will be totally deprived of God's presence and comfort, will suffer pains in body and soul, and will suffer pangs of conscience, anguish and despair. Matthew 8:12, Mark 9:47-48, Revelation 14:10, 21:8.
- there will be degrees of punishment. Matthew 11:22, 24, Luke 12:47-48, 20:47
- it will be endless. Matthew 25:46, Mark 9:43, 48, Luke 16:26, 2 Thessalonians 1:9

The final state of the righteous

- God will melt down and remake the universe. Psalm 102:25-26, Hebrews 12:26-28, 2 Peter 3:10-13.
- believers will inherit heaven, but also the entire new creation. John 14:2, Matthew 5:5, Revelation 21:1-4.
- they will enjoy everlasting life, and everlasting communion with God. Matthew 25:46, Revelation 21:3.
- all will be perfectly happy, and yet there will be different levels of enjoyment. Daniel 12:3, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, 2 Corinthians 9:6.

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