

The Seriousness of Sin

God has already taken action to deal with the tragic state of this present evil world by sending His Son to die for the sins of all people. Following on from that, we need to understand what sin is and why we each need Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Sin is not a subject to which we usually give much consideration, in spite of the apostle Paul's declaration in Romans 6:23 that 'the wages of sin is death.' But if death really is the end result of sin, shouldn't we understand what it is and place more importance on avoiding it?

Today many people take the concept of sin all too lightly, often choosing to disregard its consequences. The desire for instant gratification seems paramount. Evidence of its downside appears later, with fractured families, ruined lives or destroyed relationships. All sin, even if it supposedly 'doesn't hurt anyone,' trails in its wake side effects and unintended consequences, frequently damaging the most vulnerable in society.

While people may dismiss sin in a careless, cavalier fashion, God never does! He sees sin as standing in the way of His great plan and purpose for human life on this earth. Sin, by definition, sits in opposition to our eternal salvation as potential sons and daughters in the everlasting Kingdom of God. It separates us from our Heavenly Father (Isaiah 59:1-2) and causes suffering and death, and is such a stubborn, implacable, deep-rooted enemy

that only the sacrifice of God's Son can cancel out its horrific consequences.

The Bible normally depicts death as a punitive event. Disobedience to God's law merits divine punishment. Thus, Jesus Christ, who was completely and totally without sin, died the



death which *our* sins richly deserve (see 2 Corinthians 5:21). In this sense we each had a hand in His death, since we have all sinned (Romans 3:23).

The Bible defines sin

'Sin is the transgression of the law' declares 1 John 3:4 in the King James Version. A more modern translation of the Bible puts it this way: 'Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is law-

lessness' (New International Version). Either rendering is correct. James states the same thing. 'If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, *you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors*' (James 2:8-9, emphasis added throughout).

Our Creator's spiritual law is summed up by the Ten Commandments, which encompass both our love for God and our love for our neighbours. Men and women express their love for God and neighbour by keeping His commandments (1 John 5:3).

Failure to love God and neighbour occurs by both commission and omission. To fail to do what is right can be as serious in its consequences as a deliberately conceived lawless act with malice aforethought. 'Therefore to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin' (James 4:17).

The apostle Paul warns us that 'the wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23). Death is the diametric polar opposite of life. James adds: 'Then, when desire [lust, KJV] has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death' (James 1:15). All

wrongdoing begins in the mind, and all wrongdoing, even in the mind, ultimately incurs the death penalty. The prophet Ezekiel was inspired to write twice that ‘the soul who sins shall die’ (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

God hates sin because He has been an unseen witness to the chaos, confusion and massive suffering it has inflicted on many generations of human beings made in His very own image. Breaking the spiritual law of God brought death to Adam and Eve – and to all their descendants – because they all transgressed it (see Romans 5:12).

Cause and effect

The Bible inextricably links sin in a

punitive way to suffering and death. It is a cause-and-effect relationship. Breaking God’s law has very serious consequences and is no laughing matter.

We cannot really comprehend the massive significance of the sacrifice of Christ unless we first understand the stark seriousness of sin in God’s sight. The gospel writers make this very plain. Some of their narratives are heavy with impending judgment if unrepentant sinners choose not to alter their ways.

For instance, Luke recorded this account concerning Christ: ‘There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their

sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but *unless you repent you will all likewise perish*. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but *unless you repent you will all likewise perish*”’ (Luke 13:1-5).

Further, the standard of righteousness required by the Sermon on the Mount leaves no room for sin. How we live our lives remains very important to God. This is a moral universe, and God has decreed that unless we really repent of our transgressions of His spiritual law and turn from our sins, inevitably we shall reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7-8).

The apostle Paul also views sin as a grim and dreadful activity. He portrays unrepentant men and women as ‘slaves to sin’ (Romans 6:17, 20), ‘sold under sin’ (Romans 7:14), and even captured by it (verse 23).

As stated previously, wrongdoing begins in the mind with wrong thoughts and desires. God is not pleased with the unlawful motives and deeds of the unrepentant. ‘The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men . . .’ (Romans 1:18).

Sobering warnings of divine punishment

In the past, God has punished evildoers like Esau, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the generation of Israelites that perished in the wilderness (Hebrews 12:16; 3:7-11; 2 Peter 2:6). Summing up these and other historical incidents, the apostle Paul warned Hebrew Christians that if those cautioned by the prophets of old did not escape divine punishment, nor would they (Hebrews 12:25).

At times even we who are already Christians may bask in the love of God

What Constitutes Sin?

God Himself laid the foundation of law in the Ten Commandments, which He codified at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20). The first four commandments relate to love for God, the last six to love for fellow human beings.

Quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, Christ condensed these ten into two simpler commandments, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets’ (Matthew 22:37-40).

Conversely, Christ also expanded the Decalogue by amplifying the spiritual aspects (the thoughts and motives behind the actions) from their literal physical meaning. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount He explained that hating someone equates to murder whilst lust in the mind for another equates to adultery (Matthew 5:22, 28).

The apostle Paul added more detail in his epistles. In Ephesians 4: 31-32, he wrote, ‘Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.’ He gave a longer list of

sins in Galatians 5:19-21: ‘Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.’

Since nature abhors a vacuum, these evil thoughts and actions should be replaced firstly with commandment keeping (1 John 5:3). Then, as we grow in our walk with Christ, we should add ‘tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love’ (Colossians 3:12-14).

Additional attributes of Christians can be found, among many other places, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7) and in Galatians 5:22-23.

None of these things can be achieved without the help of Christ living in us through the Holy Spirit. For more information, please download or request our free booklets *The Ten Commandments* and *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.

to the extent that we neglect obedience and overcoming – placing our eternal salvation in serious jeopardy. We are called to repentance and a reaffirming of our first love.

Our access to the Father is very precious. It has come to us at an enormous price – the shed blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. It is only through Christ that we can come before the

Father and have a relationship with him. The Father will not be in the presence of sin. No sin or sinner exists in the Holy City described in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. Divine holiness and human sin cannot co-exist on a permanent basis. Our past transgressions must be purged and we need to retain an ongoing attitude of obedience and repentance.

Although the Father cannot co-exist with sin or tolerate it in His holy presence, in His mercy He fashioned a way to get rid of it and its effects forever, not by destroying, but by saving the repentant sinner.

How we are redeemed and moved in status from sinner to saint, will be the subject of a future article.

John Ross Schroeder (1937-2014)

What Is a Saint?

‘Saint’ has come to mean someone deemed to be an eminently holy person, who is officially recognised as such after death. But what is the Bible definition of a saint?

Saint in the New Testament is translated from the Greek word *hagioi*, which is related to the Greek *hagios* meaning ‘holy’ (*New Bible Dictionary*, second edition, pp. 486-487).

Scripture states that God is holy, ‘but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy”’ (1 Peter 1:15-16). As the ultimate example and source of holiness, God commands us to become holy as He is. Holiness includes both the idea of being separated for a special purpose and being pure and right – acting and thinking like God.

Church members are ‘saints’

It may come as a shock to some, but God calls all members of His Church to be holy – literally, to be both now and in the future, ‘saints.’ Consider the opening verses of the first epistle to the Corinthians, which prove this beyond dispute: ‘To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours’ (1 Corinthians 1:2).

Sanctified can be translated as ‘set apart’ (Jewish New Testament), or as the Amplified Bible expands it, ‘to those consecrated and purified and made holy.’ All members of the Church

of God are called to be ‘saints,’ or God’s ‘own holy people’ (New Living Translation). The many problems Paul describes in the Church of God in Corinth show that the brethren were far from achieving the goal of holiness, but that is what they were called and what they were aiming for.

Paul continues this theme in Ephesians 4:11-12 where he explains that the task of Church leaders is ‘for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.’ This shows that all Christians, not just the leaders, are included in the term ‘saints.’ Notice too that in Paul’s greeting the saints are listed separately from their leaders: ‘Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, *with the bishops and deacons*’ (Philippians 1:1, emphasis added).

Paul uses the same terminology to describe Christians at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1) and at Colosse (Colossians 1:1-2). In Philippians 4:22, he states, ‘All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household.’ Here we have an example of living saints in one Church area greeting living saints in another.

If you are a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, have repented of your sins, been baptised and have received

the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, then by biblical definition you are a saint. However, a saint must continue to obey God and remain faithful to the end. ‘Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus’ (Revelation 14:12). Saints may slip up and sin but they are not habitual sinners.

Change of emphasis

So how did the meaning of the word ‘saint’ change? According to the *New Bible Dictionary*, the apostles called all Christians saints, and ‘it continued to be used as a general designation at least up to the days of Irenaeus and Tertullian, though after that it degenerated in ecclesiastical usage into an honorific title’ (second edition, pp. 487-488).

Instead of being a term for all those called by God, some claimed the power to decide who was and who was not a saint. This is contrary to clear biblical teaching, where all repentant sinners, striving with the help of God’s Spirit in them to overcome the pulls of the flesh and of the world are designated ‘saints.’

For more understanding, please download or request our booklet *The Church Jesus Built*.

Priorities in Prayer

What Should We Be Praying For?

What can a popular TV quiz show tell us about our nation's prayer priorities? How do they compare to those Christ gave us?

The game show 'Family Fortunes' first appeared on our screens in January 1980. Over the decades it has been revamped a number of times. Based on the responses of 100 people to a series of questions or preferences, the object of the programme is for two families to guess what the most popular answers were.

In an episode aired in early 2014, one of the questions posed was: 'What do people pray for most?' The team correctly guessed the top answer.

- Thirty-eight of the 100 people questioned said *money*, making it the most popular response.
- Next was *health*, with 23 respondents.
- *Good weather*, with 13.
- *Peace*, and
- *Help*, both with 11.
- *Miracles*, with just 4.

People's prayer priorities

It would be difficult to estimate how representative of the praying public these answers are. Responders may have included a much wider range of comments not reflected in the final categories. In addition, it is not clear from the groupings whether the requests would be for self, close relatives or others. Bearing in mind the limitations of the survey, these six responses show varying degrees of self-interest, and a lack of understanding of the vast scope of prayer and its potential for personal spiritual growth.

Even if all these requests were intended to help others, would God be likely to grant them or does He want us to prioritise more important matters in our prayer life?

Six aspects of prayer

The Bible catalogues six aspects we should mention in our prayers. However, these bear little resemblance to the list above. In what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ set out a model of prayer as a guide for our requests to God (Matthew 6:9-13).

These verses give an outline of what we should include in our private

Pray in This Manner

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into
temptation, but deliver us
from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and
the power and the glory forever.

(Matthew 6:9-13)

conversations with the Almighty, but were never intended to be recited by rote.

- Most important of all is acknowledging that God is 'our Father' (not only 'my Father'), and that He is in heaven – a Being far greater than we are. Additionally, we are to praise Him for His greatness – to 'hallow' His name. The word 'hallow' means to treat as sacred, set apart. Sadly, this

rarely happens in modern society where the use of God's name in a profane or disrespectful manner is endemic and pervasive. Christians should pray for help to avoid misusing God's holy name or otherwise disrespecting Him. They can also pray that the time will soon come when everyone will honour Him.

- Next is a plea for God to send His kingdom to this earth soon. This will be a kingdom ruled by Jesus Christ which will bring peace and prosperity to all. It will see the end of war, famine, disease and all the other ills from which humanity inexorably suffers nowadays.

We should ask God to open doors and provide the resources and personnel to spread the Gospel message in a powerful way. (For more information, please request or download our free booklet *The Gospel of the Kingdom*.)

- Hand in hand with the second request goes the third: 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Most seek only their own desires rather than wanting to see the will of God done.

Fervent entreaties for these first three points would benefit not just Christians but the entire world. They show love for God and for neighbour – an attitude of giving, in contrast to getting.

Personal requests

The other three requests Christ mentions involve help for the individual.

- An appeal for necessary physical provisions. 'Give us this day our daily bread' suggests that we should not be

asking for more material possessions than we need on a day-to-day basis. There can be a great gulf between what human beings imagine they need and what they actually require. God is generous and will bless those who follow Him, but He will not bless those who are greedy, covetous, or worse (James 4:1-4). As with 'Our Father,' 'our daily bread' includes all people, and at this point, we can certainly include requests for the health and well-being of loved ones and for the whole world.

• Next, we should address our spiritual needs, the first of which is to seek forgiveness. This should not be for us alone. Christ's example was, 'forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' The word 'debt' is a metaphor for sins and offences. We must repent of our sins and ask for help not to repeat them. The prophet Daniel, one of the most righteous men who ever lived (Ezekiel 14:14), confessed in a long prayer to God both his own sins and the sins of his people (Daniel 9:1-19).

This presupposes that we understand what sin is and our need to seek God's mercy.

Forgiveness is also conditional in the sense that as we seek to be forgiven we should extend the same mercy to any who may have offended us (Matthew 6:14-15). It may be necessary to cry out to God for help to do this, since humans often find it easier to hold a grudge than to forgive.

• The final request is for spiritual protection: 'Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one'. Temptation covers a whole range of meanings from 'difficult trials,' which may be allowed by God to test our faith, through to our own failings to resist sin. We should pray daily for God to guide our steps so that we do not fall into behaviours that would hurt us spiritually, and for protection against the wiles of Satan. This latter would include a plea for wisdom and for the armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-20).

Power of prayer

Our prayers should end in praise and honour to our Creator, thanking Him that His purposes will be accomplished in the end for the good of all. Elsewhere in the New Testament, it is clear that requests should invoke the name and authority of Jesus Christ (John 14:13).

Going before the Majesty of God to make known our needs and requests is not a matter to be taken lightly, nor should it be done in an attitude of selfishness, anger or greed. The apostle Paul gives further advice on the content of our prayers (Philippians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:1-4). We need to prioritise our requests as our Saviour instructed.

Prayer comprises far more than the one-word answers given by those responding to the 'Family Fortunes' questions, substantially more than can be covered in this brief article. For further information on prayer, please request or download our reprint article 'The Privilege and Power of Prayer.'

David Young

Smoothing the Way

Christianity is about relationships, firstly with God but also with one another. How can common courtesies, consideration and plain good manners help us get along better?

In the past, British good manners were considered among the best in the world. Now such practices are often regarded as old-fashioned, pretentious or the domain of the 'upper classes.' Is there a place for good manners, especially for Christians today?

As parents, we want to give our children the best tools to prosper in their lives. We want them to succeed at school, to have a fulfilling career, to have strong friendships, to find the right husband or the right wife. We are often left wondering how we can help them to achieve all of these goals.

Our 19-month-old boy recently

received a gift of a rather interesting and thought-provoking 'lift the flap' book called *My Book of Manners*. But what are good manners? Is it just about having good table habits? Or is there more to it than that?

Is it now completely old-fashioned to act with courtesy?

Good manners involve many facets. They include not only how we speak, but what we say, how we dress, how we sit, how we eat and how we treat others. They are a way of showing love for other people. As a code of standard behaviours in public and private, etiquette is a fundamental part of sound

social skills that smooth our interactions with each another.

Words like 'please' when asking for something, 'thank you' when we receive it, or saying 'sorry' when we have wronged somebody, have a huge impact on how our family, friends and colleagues respond to us. Unfortunately, these little, yet meaningful, words seem to have become progressively overlooked in today's society.

Love and respect for others

A good way to describe manners from a biblical perspective is to love, respect and appreciate others. In other

words, to treat everyone as we would like to be treated (Matthew 7:12). God commands us, 'Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one' (Colossians 4:6).

There is a way to speak to one another that is edifying, filled with respect and outgoing concern. Not only what we say, but how we say it, can have a tremendous impact on others. In applying courtesy in daily circumstances, we will find ourselves considering others more and ourselves less.

In Philippians 4:5 we read, 'Let your gentleness be known to all men.' In other words, God tells us to be a gentle man or a gentle woman. Studies show that the first few seconds of a conversation set the tone for the whole interaction, whether this is negative or positive. If we arrive at work and do not greet anyone, how can we expect colleagues to respond well to us?

The way we behave when driving can also shed light on our attitudes. Are we fair-minded drivers? Do we become impatient or irritable in a traffic jam? Do we make allowances for others? After all, everyone makes mistakes. Bad behaviour often encourages an equally poor response which can spiral into road rage.

Interaction with others

When we interact with others we should try to speak and act in a manner which both uplifts and inspires. Courtesy is one practical way of demonstrating love, respect and appreciation of others.

Do we speak with gentleness and consideration to our spouse? How do we interact with our children? Do we lead them in love? Our words have great power. 'Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad' (Proverbs 12:25).

The responsibility to teach appro-

priate behaviour regularly to our children is important as it will help them interact with others they meet who have different life circumstances, and increase their confidence.

The way we treat our own family shows a lot about the person we really are.

Benefits of good manners

Some benefits of applying courtesy in our daily lives include:

- Being a positive role model at home by setting the right example for our children. Thus they will learn how to behave in different social settings. It is lovely to hear good reports saying that our children are polite and smiling, and saying 'please' and 'thank you.'
- Through our gentle ways, we become more appealing to others, even making God's ways attractive (Titus 2:10, NIV).
- Being calm and having gentle words in challenging situations helps

to reduce stress levels.

- If we are courteous in our approach with others, we are more likely to receive a gentle response (Proverbs 15:1).
- From a professional point of view, business etiquette can have a positive impact on our career. It is far easier to deal with someone who is polite and helpful than someone you would be afraid of upsetting because his or her language and behaviour would quickly deteriorate into rudeness.

Courtesy involves putting others first. 'Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others' (Philippians 2:4). In the me-centric thinking that reigns in our society, a little bit of respect, gentleness, appreciation and good behaviour will make a difference, for us and for everybody. If we apply good manners, our family, our friends, our neighbours will notice it. Let us make their day.

David Lechien

Some Common Courtesies

- Opening doors for others. Traditionally men did this for women, but everyone can hold doors for others, and especially for the elderly, disabled, women with young children, or someone carrying a load. Be sure to thank those who hold the door for you.
- Arrive on time. If you are unavoidably delayed, try to contact your host to advise your likely arrival time. If you have agreed to be somewhere or to do something, do not change your mind because a more interesting offer comes up (Psalm 15:4).
- Say 'please' and 'thank you.' If you have accepted an invitation, a small gift might be appropriate (flowers, a bottle of wine or chocolate). In addition, try to remember to send a 'thank you' note after the event.
- Especially show respect for the elderly (Leviticus 19:32). Give up your seat on the bus or train, open and close car doors, or offer to carry parcels or bags for them.
- Do not brag or constantly put yourself forward (Proverbs 27:2). Do not talk loudly and draw attention to yourself, especially in public.
- Don't use rude or vulgar language (Ephesians 4:29).
- Show patience – wait for others to be served before beginning to eat, unless your host indicates otherwise.
- Men should remove their hats (including baseball caps and the like) in a house or church.
- Make sure you give more attention to your host or companions than to your mobile phone. If you cannot resist looking at new messages, then turn it off.



Spirit (Acts 8:17; 2 Timothy 1:6). From this time on we should live a life in obedience to God, with the help of His Spirit living in us (Romans 6:4, 11-13).

Baptism signifies our repentance, the end of a life of habitual sinning and the

beginning of a new life devoted to righteousness.

It is important because it goes right to the heart of God's forgiveness of our sins and His gift of salvation. Through His death Christ paid the penalty for our sins (Romans 6:23). At the Passover meal the night before His crucifixion, Jesus blessed a cup of wine and said to His disciples, 'For this is [represents] My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matthew 26:28).

Paul explained that 'God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8). He added, 'Having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him' (verse 9). Paul also wrote, 'This is a faithful saying: "For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him"' (2 Timothy 2:11).

What does it mean that we die with Christ? Baptism is a symbolic burial ceremony – commanded by Jesus Himself – through which we accept Him as our personal Saviour, and His death as a sacrifice for our sins. 'I

delivered to you first of all,' wrote Paul, 'that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Paul also explains, 'Do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death?' (Romans 6:3).

Through the ceremony of baptism we become symbolically united with Christ in death. 'For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin' (Romans 6:5-6).

Genesis 2:17 seems to suggest that Adam and Eve would die the very day they took of the forbidden fruit, when clearly they did not?

J B, Lincoln

As you point out, this verse initially appears to say that once Adam and Eve took the forbidden fruit, they would die that same day. In reference to this scripture, the Nelson Study Bible (NKJV) makes this statement on the words 'shall surely die': 'These emphatic words are made of two forms of the verb meaning "to die." The point is not that the guilty person would drop dead right then, but that it would certainly happen – there is no escape (Hebrews 9:27).'

Q What does baptism do, and why is it important?

J M, Dungannon

A It is through baptism that we formally make our commitment to permanently turn from sin and surrender our lives to God. This part of the conversion process follows true repentance. Peter said, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38).

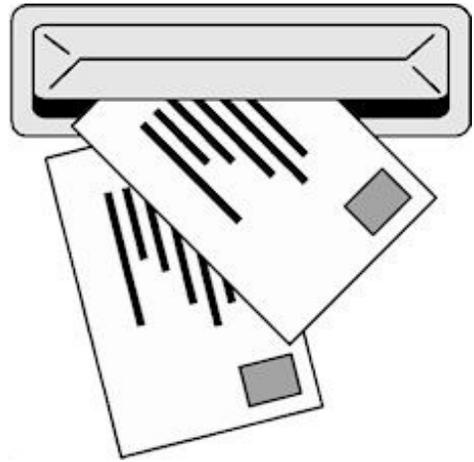
The symbolism of baptism as the burial of the old self requires a ceremony picturing a true burial. Only baptism by immersion fulfills this symbolic requirement. Therefore, following the example of our Saviour, we too should be fully immersed in water when we are baptised, symbolically burying the old self, along with all our sins, with Him in a watery grave.

The final part of the ceremony involves the 'laying on of hands' by an ordained minister of Jesus Christ, with a prayer for the receipt of God's Holy

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Letters from our readers



Help with understanding

Thank you very much for the booklets you have sent me. They are very interesting and help me understand certain things so much better.

J H, Wallasey

I have been receiving *The Good News* magazine for about 12 months now. Please continue to send me this invaluable resource. Jesus said 'my people perish for lack of knowledge' (Hosea 4:6) and these magazines teach me so much, things I couldn't learn at church or anywhere else.

C C, Lancashire

Thank you for your highly inspirational publications, giving guidance to practical Christianity.

R R, Kent

Thank you for your informative booklets. I love the way you explain complicated things in a simple way.

I S, Northern Ireland

This is a truly interesting and informative magazine, good to read and great to follow. This country, as with others, needs the true word of Christ instilled in them all.

A G, Devizes

Your recent *Good News* (March/April 2014) is full of wonderful and informative reading about the Easter story. My thinking has been changed for the better.

S R, Derbyshire

• *Additional copies of the March/April 2014 Good News highlighting the biblical spring festivals are available on request.*

Your reading material is very in depth and has motivated me to develop a far more meaningful and loving relationship with God. I have learned more about the book of truth. Also I have been inspired to forgive others who have 'trespassed against me' and to show them love and understanding as our Father has instructed.

M S, New Romney

Signs of the times

I know that only God will decide when 'enough is enough' and, as with Noah's preaching, will give a warning, or has already started giving this warning. I feel we are very much living in the last days. The signs Jesus told to His disciples are very much like today's problems. So why is this not taught more in Christian circles? Maybe I am wrong, but where I have asked about this subject and Revelation, it has been politely dismissed.

A E C, Stamford

• *You may find it helpful to read our free booklets Are We Living in the Time of the End? and The Book of Revelation Unveiled.*

There is no other magazine that I know of that is proclaiming the good news. I pray this small donation will help.

I M G, Wales

Informative magazine

Sorry I have not been able to pursue the *Bible Study Course* [due to ill-health]. I have found your bi-monthly magazines amazingly informative. Please keep them coming.

M R, Yeovil

Thank you for sending me the last

two editions of *The Good News*. I have enjoyed them so much. I would very much like to read your booklet *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*.

R F, St Leonards on Sea

Please keep sending me your most informative *Good News* magazines. They are a constant reminder of the good things to come in the future.

J B, Birmingham

Please renew my free subscription to *The Good News* magazine. I've enjoyed the *Bible Study Course* and the magazine is one of the ways that reinforces my belief in God.

D K, Nottingham

Bible Study Course

Please continue to send me my free lessons of the *Bible Study Course*. Although there has been much going on in my life over the last few months and time for study seems to disappear (I am having to discipline myself to make time), I really enjoy the studies and will be sending in the tests when I've done the third one.

I am truly interested in the Feasts and want to learn more. For many years I wondered why, as a Christian, I didn't like 'Christmas.' My eyes were opened some time ago, when I discovered it wasn't Christian.

J B, Devon

• *Our booklets God's Holy Day Plan and Holidays or Holy Days are available on request.*