

The foundation of our belief

Repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God

When we come to faith, when we asked Jesus into our heart, we have a lot to learn. Luckily the Lord helps us, by His Spirit, to teach us those things that are important to learn. It is striking that people who just came into faith, read quite a lot in the Bible. That is good but also makes sense, because everything we would like to know about our faith can be found in the Bible. It is the Word of God.

If you have read the Gospel of John, you probably have noticed that Jesus is being called "the Word." It was Him who spoke, and it was there. He created all, the whole creation. But the Bible is also His Word. What the authors of the Bible have written, they received from: the Word "by the Holy Spirit".

Everything, of which God wants us to know, is in the Bible. Very profound things or "high", it just depends how you look at them, but also the most elementary things. Paul, one of the disciples, calls this: the elementary teachings about Christ, also called the foundation.

Jesus Himself gave a nice story as example for a foundation. Among other things it is in

Matthew 7:24-27

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

A clear story. Our faith must have a solid foundation. A rock is the best starting point to build a foundation on. Then everything can

happen in our life but our faith will stand firm on the foundation that is build on the rock. That rock is Jesus. He is God.

There are a lot of texts that show that Jesus is The Rock, I will show a few from
2 Samuel 22:3,32, and 47
"3 my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour--from violent men you save me."

Everything, of which God wants us to know, is in the Bible.

"32 For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?"

"47 "The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Saviour!"

If we are to get busy with the foundation, that foundation has to be build on Jesus, The Rock.

Of what does this foundation consist? Paul explains this in the letter he wrote to the Hebrews. It is written in chapter 6. He only hints at this indirectly because he doesn't want to talk about the foundation all the time. The house that is to be build upon it is of course more interesting. But still, since a foundation always has to be laid we are going to discuss this first. The text which shows of which the foundation consists is the following: (We will read it in two different translations)

Hebrews 6:1-2

" Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment." Hebrews 6:1, 2, NIV.

" Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” Hebrews 6:1, 2, KJV.

The foundation consists of the following topics:

1. Conversion of dead works and belief in God
2. The teaching of baptism and laying on of hands
3. The resurrection of the dead and of an eternal judgment

The good and bad works

We will now discuss the first part of the foundation: conversion of dead works and belief in God.

What are they, works?

We can of course take out a dictionary to find the meaning of “works” but that is not the way to look into Biblical matters. When we would like to find out about Biblical topics, we have to look for the answer in that same Bible. We have to steadily look up all texts concerning “works” and then ask God to give us wisdom to find those texts, which are important to this subject. You can do this yourself, the concordance is a wonderful tool for this but for now I have already done some

preparation. For this I use a computer program with different Biblical translations, Dutch as well as English/American. With such a program it is very easy to get all the texts, which contain the particular word we are looking for. I have worked through all these texts and it appeared to me that there are many kinds of works. There are only two texts, which talk about “dead works”.

In the New Testament alone are 133 texts, which talk about “works”. There are texts which discuss “good works”, others talk about “bad works” or “works of the law” but there are also texts which talk about “the works of God.” We should read a few and try to understand what

they are about.

The first text we come across is

Matthew 5:16

“let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Then there are a few like:

Ephesians 2:10

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

1 Timothy 6:18

“Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.”

But there are also works not that good, also from these texts some examples:

John 3:19-20

“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

Colossians 1:21

“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.”

Revelation 9:20

“The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood--idols that cannot see or hear or walk.”

Like this there are many more texts, which make it clear that there are good works and bad ones. The works that God likes can only be done if you let yourself be lead by Him. That in turn is only possible if you have been converted, if you said to God with whole your heart: “God, I am a sinner, would you please forgive me.” You are asking Jesus to come into your heart; He will guide you also in good works.

The works that God likes can only be done if you let yourself be lead by Him.

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

Those who do not follow what God wants are doing the works that are bad and then it appears from the Bible that you automatically do the works of Gods opponent, the devil.

This kind of works leads to death, the eternal death, always being separated from God.

But, you might say, **I am doing my best to do well!**

That in itself is fine. The problem only is that you might do your best to do well but if you don't acknowledge God as the God in your life, you will never do it right.

What Paul really means with you having to convert from dead works is that you cannot earn the eternal life by doing well. Everything you try to do yourself is dead works in Gods eyes.

Man by nature has drifted so far away from God that nothing we do will reconcile us again with God. That is why God brought His Son Jesus into the world.

John 3:16-17

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

John 14:6

Jesus became the way to God.

“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.”

If we admit that all our good works are not enough to get to God, we admit that they are actually dead works. If we don't expect anything from that but put our faith in Jesus, then Jesus will be The Way to the Father.

Then we are going to do the works of God. And then what do we have to do? In the Bible we also come across this question. The people asked Jesus:

John 6:28-29

“... What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one

he has sent.”

In short it amounts to us having to admit that nothing we do- as long as we didn't accept God in our lives as Lord of our life- has eternal value. God wants to be your heavenly Father but He can be this only if you believe in Jesus. Turn yourself to Him and He will come into your life and help you to live according to His will. From that moment on you are a child of God and have eternal life. That doesn't mean that you can no longer die in this life but that after this life you will have eternal life in the kingdom of God. What a wonderful life that must be!

Peter also gives this appeal:

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,”

In another letter Peter says:

2 Peter 3:9

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but **everyone to come to repentance.**”

These calls are addressed not only to the people who really did their best to do well in this life but surely also to those who made a mess of things. Even to those who willfully wronged.

Jesus has, when he hung on the cross for our sins, given forgiveness to a murderer and promised him that after this dying he would pass on to the paradise.

It is never too bad what you have done. Jesus already took on all your sins. If you repent and ask Him forgiveness He will forgive you. But it

could be too late to ask forgiveness! You can only ask for forgiveness in this life. Do it now! God wants to be your Father too.

Man by nature has drifted so far away from God that nothing we do will reconcile us again with God.

Dead works

Israel is a special people to God. He had and has His plans for them. God gave them a law. The main point is the Ten Commandments. They too had to sacrifice. Those sacrifices pointed to the great sacrifice that Jesus, on the cross, would bring. The people who repented something they had done wrong went to the priest and sacrificed an animal. By their repentance and that (replacing) offering, the relationship between them and God was being restored.

There is a fragment in the letter to the Hebrews, which explains how this is set in proportion to the sacrifice of Jesus.

“When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”
Hebrews 9:11-14

Jesus did not bring the blood of an animal into the heavenly sanctuary before God's throne, but His own blood. He sacrificed Himself to God as an offering!

If you repent your life until now and accept that this sacrifice was made for you, then from now on you can serve the living God. **The blood of Jesus cleanses you from all sins, also from your dead works.**

Isn't it great what Jesus has done?!

Belief in God

In the letter to the Romans Paul writes:

Romans 10:9-13

“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

When you say to God “Lord God, my life is not like you had meant it to be, will you forgive me?” Then you say this because you believe that God exists.

You can talk to God because you believe that Jesus died for you.

By saying such things to God you are building your faith in Him. The Bible promises that then you will not be ashamed. You will be saved.

When you say to God “Lord God, my life is not like you had meant it to be, will you forgive me?” Then you say this because you believe that God exists.

It is good to share your faith with others like the afore mentioned text shows. But you also have to live by it. The Lord Jesus encourages us to shine our light and do good works.

Matthew 5:16

“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

A few verses further on Jesus warns us:

Matthew 6:1

“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

In the letter he wrote to Titus, he very eloquently explains why we should have a great desire to do well.

Titus 2:11-14

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”

So we keep on working. Before our conversion we did “dead works”. After our conversion we do “good works.” We cannot earn eternity with it but by our good works we show the love of God working through us.

Next we will talk about the the teaching of baptism.

Instruction about baptisms and of the laying on of hands

The Bible itself speaks of "The Foundation". Paul encourages the Hebrews not to stick with the elementary teachings about Christ. He want to move on. Of course they need the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instructions about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. (Hebrew. 6:1 and 2). But that is the foundation, not the building itself.

Those first things that a Christian should know is called by Paul 'milk' in contrast with solid food. (1 Corinthians 3:1)

He uses this image to make it clear that a christian should grow. A newly converted christian gets 'milk', or the basic things which are the foundation of our belief.

Later on, when you are more mature, you get solid food. Solid food is not good for a baby, it would suffocate. A baby needs first milk. The same way is it with newly converted people, no matter what age they have in the world.

First there must be a good foundation, then the more in-depth studies can be studied. Some are ready for that after a few months, for others it will take years. You know for your self when you are ready for solid food.

Last time we talked about the first part of the foundation. About Jesus Christ who was crucified. About repentance, faith in God and forgiveness. Not very exhaustive, because you could write a book about every subject, but you can go on yourself with the basic information we gave. And now we are going to look to baptism.

Water Baptism

The Greek word is: Baptizo. That means 'immerse'. Why is the word immerse used and not 'sprinkle'? We can find the answer in the letter to the Romans, written by Paul.

Romans 6:3-4

“Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Baptism is an image of being buried with Christ. Under water we can't live. So, when we go under water we are actual dead, in the grave. We want to show by this that we let our old life behind us, we leave it in the grave. But that's not all. The one who baptizes lift us also out of the water, out of the grave. And that is the second part of this beautiful meaning of baptism: getting part of new life. Jesus rose from the dead, and in that way the rising up from the water grave stands for rising up from the dead. The death that ruled over us when we were without Christ. Now we can live a new life.

Those first things that a Christian should know is called by Paul 'milk' in contrast with solid food.

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

Romans 6:5-11

“5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--

7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

You probably want to know how it happened that people are baptized with sprinkling of water, while speaking about adding into the covenant. When babies are baptized (sprinkled) the parents do a vow, the child doesn't say anything (it even can't). The pastor speaks about that the child is taken into the covenant.

Why is it that in some churches totally different values are used then in other churches which uses Romans 6 as base?

That is a rather complicated story and therefore not so suitable to deal with in a kind of beginners course.

I will try to summarize it in a simple way.

It has to do that the church for centuries has teaches that the Jews murdered Christ and that therefore Gods covenant with the Jews is transferred to the church.

The church is in that vision 'spiritual Israel'.

In the meantime churches are coming back one by one from that dogma. They see too that it is a miracle that Israel is a nation again. In one church they teach open that God didn't reject Israel, in the other they are not that far.

When one thought that Gods covenant with Israel went to the church, one looked how the covenant with Israel was confirmed. That was done by circumcision by boys at the age of eight. Paul was very specific about the act of circumcision with Christians, so that was not what the church wanted to do, something else must be found. They thought that baptism would be a good replacement. The child will be cleansed from the original sin and included in the covenant with God.

Those gentleman who figured this out were of course absolutely honest in their meaning, but as far as I'm concerned, and many other 'evangelicals', they were wrong.

In the New Testament we can't read something like child baptism. Baptism as mentioned in Romans 6 has to do with a personal decision. You admit that you are a sinner, you convert to God and accept that Jesus died for you on the cross. So, when you turn away from your old life (Paul calls that life in the flesh - that is earthly minded) you die spiritual. It is not possible to this by your own for God.

Therefore we die in Jesus (in the likeness of his death. Romans 6:5), and we rise 'in the likeness of His resurrection'.

It is not possible for a baby to agree with this all. You have to be kind of mature to take that decision.

There is a nice story in Acts about a man of Ethiopia, who, after some explanation recognized that he had to be baptized. He asked Philip:

Acts 8:36

"36 See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? (KJV)

When you see this question and the answer that is given by Philip, you know when it is good to be baptized. Philip answers:

Acts 8:37

"And Philip said, If thou believeth with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.(KJV)

In the New Testament we can't read something like child baptism.

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

(Strange enough is this verse not in the NIV!)

The Ethiopian guy was already explained what it meant: For his life was taken from the earth (we would say: That Jesus would die) as we can read in verse 33. Beyond doubt Philip explained that this have to be done by every believer, because the eunuch understand what it means to be baptized.

The churches who talk about including in the covenant, do that based on verses from

Colossians 2:11-12

" In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."

Because these verses speak about circumcision (which has to do with the covenant with God) as well as baptism, one thought the baptism took the place of circumcision.

Texts are sometimes difficult to read, that's why it is a good idea to take some other translations.

"The Living Bible" is a good alternative. Very good understandable English.

For real bible study the King James Version is better.

Let us read now the New Living Translation:

Colossians 2:11-15

"11 When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. 12 For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead."

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.

Also very beautifully are the next verses:

"13 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.

14 He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. 15 In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross."

This is overwhelming!

It shows fantastic how complete the dying of Jesus was. Not only for us, but also against the spiritual powers which offer resistance to God.

When we read these verses well, it is clear that they show that a personal choice has to be made and that it is not about an automatic insertion in to the covenant with God.

One says that baptism later on is confirmed with the conformation. Of course there is nothing

against a public statement about your faith, but this rule is manmade and can't be find in the bible as the way we have to go.

About everything is a lot to say. In other bible studies this subject will be studied.

When you read well, you would noticed, that in Hebrew 6 the bible speaks about 'baptisms' - Plural.

We talked about one baptism, baptism by submerging. And some words about baptism by sprinkling.

The other baptism we have to study is the baptism with, or in the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Included in the foundation of the christian faith is a doctrine of baptism. Above we talked about the baptism of repentance and rebirth. The baptism of submerge. Dying with Jesus and being resurrected with Him.

When Peter speaks to the Jews in Acts 2 they ask him:

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

Acts 2:37-38

"Men and brethren, what shall we do?
38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent,
and be baptized every one of you in the
name of Jesus Christ for the remission of
sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the
Holy Ghost."

So they went baptized and got the gift of the Holy Spirit. Is that the same as being baptized in the Holy Spirit?

When we want to see this more clear we have to read some bible verses first.

Just before Jesus went to heaven He tells the disciples not to leave Jerusalem,

" but wait for the gift my Father promised,
which you have heard me speak about.
5 For John baptized with water, but in a
few days you will be baptized with the
Holy Spirit."

(The word 'with' should be translated in
both cases with 'in'.)

Acts 1:4-5

Jesus speaks here of two baptisms.
One in water and one in the Holy
Spirit. Are those both the same
baptism?

When you are baptized in water, are
you then automatically baptized in
the Holy Spirit?

No, that is not the same. When you
become a believer and will be
baptized, then you receive the Holy Ghost, but
that is not the same as being baptized in the
Holy Ghost. I will try to explain this.

At the last supper Jesus said to His disciples:

Luke 22:32

"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith
fail not: and when thou art converted,
strengthen thy brethren." (KJV).

So, the disciples were not converted at that
time. That wasn't even possible, because Jesus
didn't yet die for their sins and wasn't
resurrected. It was not possible for them at that
moment to turn away from their old life, to die
with Christ and go on in a new life with Him.
When Jesus appeared to them after His

resurrection He saw their faith, He knew their
hearts and knew that they were converted.

John 20:19-23

"19 On the evening of that first day of the
week, when the disciples were together,
with the doors locked for fear of the
Jews, Jesus came and stood among
them and said, "Peace be with you!"
20 After he said this, he showed them his
hands and side. The disciples were
overjoyed when they saw the Lord.
21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you!
As the Father has sent me, I am sending
you."
22 And with that he breathed on them
and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.
23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they
are forgiven; if you do not forgive them,
they are not forgiven."

Jesus blows on His disciples and gave them the
Holy Spirit. (In Hebrew is the word for wind and
spirit the same).

Jesus speaks
here of two
baptisms. One
in water and
one in the Holy
Spirit.

In the beginning of John Jesus tells
something about that:

John 3:8

"8 The wind blows wherever it
pleases. You hear its sound, but you
cannot tell where it comes from or
where it is going. So it is with
everyone born of the Spirit."

Why did get the disciples, after they were
converted, the Holy Spirit? Why do get people
which are converted, and like Acts 2 shows us:
let themselves baptized, the Holy Spirit? That
answer we can find in the letter to the
Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:13-14

"13 And you also were included in Christ
when you heard the word of truth, the
gospel of your salvation. Having
believed, you were marked in him with a
seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is
a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance
until the redemption of those who are
God's possession--to the praise of his
glory."

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

When we become a believer we receive the Holy Spirit as a deposit. God has, so to speak, the contract what we have in conjunction with eternal life and the inheritance that has to do with son ship, made legal by marking it with a seal. And as we can read, that seal is the Holy Spirit.

In that beautiful chapter 8 of Romans we read more about this:

Romans 8:10-11

"10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you."

It will be clear, as I hope, that everyone who became a believer, received the Holy Spirit, as a seal, as a deposit, as the life giving Spirit. But that is not the same as being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

You can be a lifetime believer and received the Holy Spirit as a deposit, but not baptized in the Spirit.

Gods word says that it is sure that you will receive eternal life and the inheritance. But being baptized in the Spirit is something that gives your life an extra dimension. You are so full of Him that it overflows. So, the disciples received the Holy Spirit before Jesus went to heaven. Apparently it is possible to receive beside that, or with that, something extra: baptism in the Holy Spirit. Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for that and He explained them what the purpose of that baptism will be:

Acts 1:8

"8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Through that announced baptism, they would receive power to witness.

The disciples were gathered at the filthiest day (Pentecost in Greek) of the feast of Weeks in one place.

Acts 2 2-4

"2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Fantastic!

What was the result?

Peter stood up with the Eleven and starts boldly to witness. With great power. The result: 3000 converts! And that for a simple fisherman! He himself wasn't like that. He became like that through the Holy Spirit who had filled him. Wait a moment, in Acts 1 Jesus told them that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit and here we read that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. They opened their hearts for God. He baptized them in His Spirit. The result is that they are full of Him. It flows over. A stream of living water.

There is another thing that strikes.

There was a blowing of a violent wind that filled the whole house. The breath of God, the Spirit of God. But it was also

something visible 'tongues of fire'.

Peter was not a real timid person, but now God had baptized him with the fire of His Spirit, he became fiery for God and preached fiery the message of the gospel.

And they began to speak in other tongues (you can translate that as well as: languages). It attracted attention. Those simple Gallilians spoke suddenly different languages. Very extraordinary. Especially when you count how many languages are mentioned. I count at least 15. Nevertheless they were with eleven men. Very surprising.

I think, it was not just a language-pronunciation-miracle, it was a language-hearing-miracle.

So, the disciples received the Holy Spirit before Jesus went to heaven.

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

From other bible studies and from practice (as if the the bible isn't practical) I know that both possibilities can happen. Paul says something about that too, I will come back to that.

We are going to read some more bible parts which speak about baptism in the Spirit. The more you read in the bible, the more things get clear. A little bit further on in Acts we read again something that has to do with being Spirit filled. A splendid story. You should read the whole chapter 4. I take, for now, two parts from this chapter that has to do with our subject.

Acts 4:8

"8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!"

Again we see Peter frankly speaking, and to make it clear that he is not doing that in his own power we read that he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

His outspokenness attended. People knew that he and John were simple people from the back country. But their witnessing was bold.

A few verses later we read another interesting text.

Acts 4:31

"31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."

Gods Spirit was poured out there too. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. And again we read that they were boldly.

You can ask yourself, reading both verses, were the ones who were baptized before in the Spirit at Pentecost now again filled. From here it is not clear, but we can't exclude that either. With other words, you might conclude from these verses that it is possible to be filled with the Holy Spirit several times in your life.

Some chapters further in Acts we can learn again something about our subject.

For the disciples it was clear when someone was 'full of faith and of the Holy Spirit'. (Acts

6:5).

For non-christians it is hard to win in a debate with Spirit filled christians.

Acts 6:9,10

"9 Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) --Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, 10 but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke."

At the beginning of this part of the study I tried to make it clear that there is a difference between receiving the Holy Spirit when you become a believer and being baptized in the Holy Spirit. In Acts 6 we read a story where it becomes clear that this is indeed the fact. Philip is a great witness for the case of God. Great miracles happen. Then we read:

Acts 8:12

"12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

We already learned that those people who become a believer get the Holy Spirit as a deposit. We read on in verse 14:

Acts 8:14-16

" When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."

We already learned that those people who become a believer get the Holy Spirit as a deposit.

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

A magnificent text. First of course because of the story and what happened, but second to learn something from these verses.

Peter and John are going to pray that those new borne christians will receive the Holy Spirit.

Apparently that is not something that happens automatically. This time God had to be asked for that. Peter and John prayed for that. Receiving of the Holy Spirit, as it is called here, is in this verse the same as being baptized in the Spirit, because, as we read here, 'they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus', that is the baptizing that has to do with being born again. New life with Jesus. When they were baptized "only" in water, because that is the baptism in the name of Jesus, then it is apparently also possible to be baptized separately in the Holy Spirit.

Then the disciples pray for them, they have to ask that from God, and laying their hands on them. They are doing that in the name of God and He fills those people, He baptizes them in the Holy Spirit. God is the baptistery, but He uses people to lay their hand onto people.

Again we move on a few chapters and we arrive at at the interesting chapter where we can read the story about Cornelius. This story too we have to read first. It is in chapter 10.

We can learn from this story that God isn't teaching us rules, He is doing His things His way. Also when it is about baptizing in the Holy Spirit.

Peter is telling the gospel again with boldness, and then

"44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter

said,

47 "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days." Acts 10:44-48

So, Peter was send by God to the gentiles, he went together with fellow believers (Jews who believed in the Messiah, the bible calls that kind of believers: circumcised believers because God entered into a covenant with the Israelites which was confirmed by the circumcision). By the way, according the bible is everyone who is not an Israelite a gentile. That is not meant negatively, the way we think now, but it only means: no Israelites.

This Cornelius was, although he was 'devout and God-fearing', a gentile. It is that you know things like that.

Alright, peter speaks his boldly words again and suddenly the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

No laying of hands on, no first baptizing in water, just whaamm!

But how knew Peter and his friends that the Holy Spirit was poured out?

We can't read about a wind or about tongues of fire. The only thing we read is: they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

This is for the believers from 'the circumcison' the prove that those 'gentiles' were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Peter thinks it is proper to baptize them in water as well, in the name of Jesus Christ.

We read one more part from Acts and after that we will have a look at 1 Corinthians 14, where we can learn something about speaking in tongues.

Paul travels a lot, at a certain point he arrives in Ephesus.

Acts 19:1-7

"While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took

When they were baptized "only" in water, because that is the baptism in the name of Jesus, then it is apparently also possible to be baptized separately in the Holy Spirit.

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples 2 and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.

4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus."

5 On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

7 There were about twelve men in all."

A clear story. Three baptisms are mentioned here. To be honest I had to discuss the baptism of John too when we talked about water baptism, but this baptism is not for us anymore, that's why I didn't mention it. Alright, we see here three baptisms:

1. a baptism of repentance (of John),
2. a baptism in the name of Jesus and
3. a baptism in the Holy Spirit

In this story too it is clear that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not an automatic baptism which happens when you become a believer. Paul placed his hand on them and undoubtedly asked God them to baptize in the Holy Spirit. The proof that they were baptized was that they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

And about that speaking in tongues and prophesying we can learn more from 1 Corinthians 14. Here too we have to read the chapter first. In this chapter there seem to be some difficult verses, but in reality they are not difficult: the speaking of women in the church. This is not our subject, so don't worry about that, we will discuss this subject in a different bible study.

In this chapter Paul speaks about two gifts of the Spirit. But there are more. At this moment I will

only talk about 'speaking in tongues, because this speaking in tongues has clearly something to do with being baptized in the Spirit.

Though not every story of people baptized in the Spirit is mentioning that they spoke in tongues, the majority does.

1 Corinthians 14:5

"I would like every one of you to speak in tongues,...."

That is a particular expression of Paul. He is telling this to the Corinthians, but in fact to us too.

You can conclude from this verse

1. that all those Corinthians could speak in tongues, but they are not all doing that and
2. that all of those who can't, Paul urged them to reach out for that.

Thinking those bible verses over of this chapter I think not all Corinthians were baptized in the Spirit, so that's one reason not all are speaking in tongues.

So, you could think, and the rest of this chapter causes that, that it is Paul's desire that those Corinthians also will seek the fruits of the Spirit. So that means that they first have to be baptized in the Spirit and then reach out to the gifts of the Spirit.

Apparently it is possible that God poured out His Spirit, but that you are doing not much with it.

We go back to the bible.

1 Corinthians 14:2

"For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God.

Indeed, no-one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit."

The speaking in tongues is evidently something that is a little bit strange. You talk, you use words, but no one can understand it. You speak a language only God understands.

On its own it is wonderful, but in the congregation it is of little use. That's why it is in the church better to prophesy, that is: speaking in understandable words, words of "strengthening, encouragement and comfort." (1 Corinthians 14:3)

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

1 Corinthians 14:4

"14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful."

Someone else (and even you) don't know what you are saying. Nevertheless the bible teaches us that it is good to pray in tongues. (vs.17).

This is a difficult subject, especially when you are yet not ready for this. When you have a great desire to exalt God, to serve Him, propagate His message, to witness, to be full of His Spirit, He will lead you to that point where you want to be. He will lead you to people who can pray with you and laying on their hands to you.

Never forget: It is not people who baptize you in the Spirit. There is no one, who put that on him or give. Only God can baptize you in His Spirit. He knows when you need that. He will lead you.

In my life it took half a year before He baptized me in His Spirit. He had a reason for that. Now I can see that reason, but it was a difficult half year. Much praying. Much calling to God. Much incomprehension on my part.

God loves you and He knows your heart. He knows when you are ready for that. Don't be disappointed, don't blame God. When people pray with you and nothing happened, it will be alright. Trust His love.

Never forget:
It is not people
who baptize
you in the
Spirit.

Laying on of hands

The first part of the foundation has as base the sacrificing love of Jesus for us.

The second part is about becoming spiritual one with Him, being merged into His Body.

The third part has to do with doing His works on the earth through our hands.

The fourth part goes about being perfectly one with Him when we will be for ever with Him.

That last part of the foundation will be covered next, now we will speak about 'laying on of hands'.

The laying on of hands is not only mentioned in the New Testament. It is known in the Old Testament as well.

When an animal was offered, the priest laid his hands on the head of the animal to, as if, the sins were transferred from the person who sinned to the animal which will be killed instead of the sinner.

An example:

Leviticus 8:14

"He then presented the bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head."

But also were hands laid on to bless. Jacob e.g. does that at his grandsons:

Genesis 48:14,20

14 "But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn. ...20 He blessed them that day"

God Himself lays His hand on people:

Psalms 139:5

"You hem me in--behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me."

In the NT we read several times that Jesus laid His hands on people.

Some examples:

Matthew 19:13-15

"Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

15 When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there."

Jesus did this to bless the children as we can see in Mark.

Mark 10:16

"And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

Jesus didn't only bless the people by laying on of hands, but He did that too to heal people.

Mark 5:23

"and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live."

Mark 6:5

"He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them."

Luke 4:40

"When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them."

It didn't stop with Jesus. He gave the believers also that possibility to laying on of hands to heal people that way.

Mark 16:18

"they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

Believers may be the hands of Jesus on earth. They may pray for people for healing, laying on of hands, bless them in Jesus' name.

Ananias was send by God to heal Paul from his blindness and also to lay his hands on him so that he received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:12, 17

12 "In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." ... 17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Paul, in his turn, laid also his hands on people:

Acts 19:6

"When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."

Acts 28:8

"His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him."

So, it is possible to bless someone with the blessing of the Lord by laying on of hands, but it is also possible to be the hands of God for healing or for baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It is of course fantastic that God uses people to be His hands here on earth.

It is also possible that someone gets special gifts by laying on of hands. I.e. knowledge of God matters, or the gift of being a shepherd in the church (we will speak about this in another bible study).

Again some examples:

1 Timothy 4:14

"Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you."

2 Timothy 1:6

" For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

It is of course fantastic that God uses people to be His hands here on earth. I know from experience that it often a bigger blessing for the one who is laying on his hands then it is for the one who were laid hands on. It is so wonderful to know that God want to use you, but also to be a channel by blessing others.

It turns out that it is not only possible that through your hands something good can 'flow' to the other, but it is also possible the other way around. When you lay your hands on someone and that person is full of sins and probably then also with demonic powers, then there is a chance that you will be contaminated. We're not talking about a simple touch. When you lay your

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

hands on someone something spiritual is happening. The purpose is that God will use your hands to 'flow' a blessing or something else to that person. You can't give something yourself, it is God who works through you. But when the person by who you make a spiritual connection by laying on your hands is not a believer in Jesus, or has hidden sins and by that is separated from God, then it is not good to lay your hand on him or her.

Paul says it this way:

1 Timothy 5:22

"Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure."

When you have the impression that you need to lay your hands on someone, then it is good to be sure that that person has confessed his/her sins and received forgiveness. Pray with such a person and set him/her free in the name of Jesus. Let him/her ask himself/herself for forgiveness and ask the Lord to cleanse their heart, then you can lay your hands on that person and give a blessing or what ever the Lord is laying on your heart to do.

Next we will talk about the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

"...resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment".

You know -I hope-, that the dead will be resurrected. And we, christians, look forward, that we, in case we already past away, will come to life again when the Lord returns. This is the subject of this bible study.

About this subject it is possible to write a book, but that's not what I'm going to do. I will keep it simple and short. When you have questions which are not answered you can always email me.

Directly in the beginning of the bible we can read about dying:

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;

17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 2:16-17

Was it Gods intention that Adam and Eve immediately dropped dead after eating from that tree? Apparently not. After Adam and Eve sinned they lived for hundreds of years and got many children.

God has seemingly other standards then we have. For us men, dead is dead. For God there are at least two kinds of 'dead'. A dying of this earthly body and a spiritual death. The spiritual death makes it impossible to get eternal life with God. The earthly death has nothing to do with that.

Spiritual dead people are not spiritual dead after they die here on earth, but they even can be spiritual dead while they are here on earth.

About those dead people speaks Jesus in Matthew.

"But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." Matthew 8:22

So, there is distinction between a 'physical dead person' and a 'spiritual dead person'.

God has seemingly other standards then we have. For us men, dead is dead. For God there are at least two kinds of 'dead'.

Two chapters further Jesus speaks about those differences.

Matthew 10:28

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

People who died can be resurrected by God. Lazarus is an example of that. And likewise their are more stories in the bible.

But those people died finally again.

The first and, till now, the only human who died and became life again and still lives, is Jesus.

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

Colossians 1:18

"And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."

Jesus is the 'firstborn from among the dead'. The bible shows us here, being resurrected has to do with born again.

Nicodemus had problems with the idea that people can be born again.

John 3:1-8

"1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.

2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no-one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

Those who want to see the Kingdom of God (and want to be part of that) have to be born again. Not from the flesh, i.e. like they were born the first time, but from the Spirit.

Romans 8:11

"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you."

1 Corinthians 15:35

"But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"

Yes, that's of course the question.

How, but also when shall the dead be resurrected?

The same chapter gives already a part of the answer. Let's read that:

1 Corinthians 15:36-53

36 ..."What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

39 All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.

40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.

41 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;

43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.

46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.

47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.

48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.

49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--

52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality."

A natural body is sown, and a spiritual body raised. Is there a natural body then there is also a spiritual body.

That spiritual body is the raised imperishable body.

When will that spiritual body be imperishable?

That depends of someone is 'spiritual born again'.

Did you live like the 'first Adam', then you are 'spiritual dead'. Did you live and, with that, surrendered to the second Adam (Jesus Christ), then you will be transformed to His likeness.

That image is not a likeness of flesh and blood, because it is not possible for flesh and blood to be part of the Kingdom of God.

We, who believe in Jesus Christ, will bare the likeness of the the heavenly. The imperishable, the eternal life.

We, who believe in Jesus Christ, will bare the likeness of the the heavenly. The imperishable, the eternal life.

Paul explains in this part, that not everyone will die. There will be people, and who knows maybe we are there too, that will live when the Lord returns. And those who live at that time, and being born again, will be changed into a spiritual body.

When? When the last trumpet sounds.

That trumpet shall sound and then the dead in Christ will be resurrected, and we, when we still live at that time, will be changed. We will get an immortal body.

In another bible book Paul writes more about that.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

"13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever."

Apparently there were people sad that their loved ones already past away. Probably they thought that those fallen asleep wouldn't get changed, or maybe a lot later.

Paul assures them: When we believe, that Jesus died and was resurrected, God will also those, who have fallen asleep, through Jesus gather with us. Not much later, but the fallen asleep will rise first and then we, who are still living at that time, will go together with

them in the clouds to meet the Lord.

This all will happen ' in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye', as it is written in 1 Corinthians 15.

What a wonderful event will that be!

What strikes attention in this part is, that we read again of a trumpet. Which trumpet is that? In the letter to the Corinthians we read about 'the last trumpet'. That's more specific.

In the letter of John where he describes the Revelation that Jesus gave him, we read also about trumpets. There are seven trumpets.

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

Let's read those verses.

Revelation 11:15-19

"15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshipped God,

17 saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great--and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm."

What a frightening time. Just before Jesus comes back it will be a time of great tribulation for the believers, but we can be sure of one thing: Jesus is the victor!

When the seventh angel blows his trumpet, that is the last trumpet, so that is the trumpet from 1 Corinthians 15, then the heaven will be opened. The ark of His covenant will be seen in the heavenly temple.

The ark of the covenant was already in the Old Testament the sign of the Messiah. The sign of Jesus.

When we then read Matthew 24 we can see that it is about the same time and the same sign.

Matthew 24:29-31

“Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

30 “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the

nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

There will be a great distress, a great tribulation. We can read about that in Revelation 12:13 till Revelations 14.

Immediately after that tribulation the sun will be darkened and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Compare Revelation 12:7-12 to read more about this.

And then the sign of the Son of Man (Jesus) will appear in the sky (the Ark). Not only the sign of the Son of Man will appear, but the Son of Man Himself will appear! On the clouds, with power and great glory!

When we go back to 1 Thessalonians, we see:

"16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Almost incomprehensible what is meant here, but especial what is going to happen. But also, how wonderful, that we, who believe in Jesus, will be part of that!

There is so much happening before that day will be there, we can't dig in this now because that goes beyond the foundation of our faith as this study is.

After Paul wrote those Thessalonians about the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 4) he thinks it is necessary to give them a little bit more information.

We read about that in his second letter to the Thessalonians:

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

1 "Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers,
2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.
3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.
4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Are only the believers in Christ resurrected? Yes, the others have to wait for thousand years.

Before the Lord comes and we will be united with Him, something will happen. Before the day of the Lord will come the man of lawlessness will be revealed. He will sit in the temple of God. He will reveal himself as the Messiah. Jesus made that clear in Matthew 24:15. Jesus calls that person: 'the abomination that causes desolation'. He is the antichrist who will (temporarily) show himself as the Christ.

That anti-christ, who initially will show himself as the real Messiah, will eventually persecute God's people to distinguish them. But after that 3.5 year of great tribulation the Lord Jesus will return on the clouds. The last trumpet will sound and we, when we are still alive at that time, will be changed in a moment and go, together with all the resurrected saints, into the air to meet the Lord.

What a majestic time will that be, but also: how hard will those years of tribulation be. Unfortunately lots of Christians will not survive and others will abandon God. But God will give strength.

And then will Jesus come. We will meet Him in the clouds and will be with Him for ever.

Are only the believers in Christ resurrected? Yes, the others have to wait for thousand years.

That will be the thousand years of God-government on this earth. The thousand year of peace. In those thousand years we, believers in Christ, will reign with Him as kings.

There is a lot more to tell about these things, but that goes beyond the foundation of belief. See for that the study about 'The Kingdom of God'.

What about eternal Judgment? But also, what about those 'others' who will not be part of that first resurrection?

First one other question: Will the believers also be judged before God's throne?

John 5:24

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

The ones who believe in God, through Jesus Christ, have eternal life and will not be judged. The condemnation is for those who didn't repent from their sins and didn't ask Jesus to be their Lord and Savior.

There will be a day where everyone, except the believers in Christ, will be judged.

We read about that in Revelation 20.

To see this in the right perspective it is good to read the whole chapter.

Revelation 20:1-15

"1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.
2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.
3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

Who is Jesus and why He became Jesus?

4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison

8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth--Gog and Magog--to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.

9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done

as recorded in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

A very fascinating bible part.

Again, there is much to say about this. For now we will have a look at the part about the great white throne.

The believers are already 1000 years 'alive' and reigned with Jesus over the earth.

And then it is time for the judgment.

All dead will be resurrected and stand before

God who sits on the white throne. Nobody is condemned before it is clear what is written in the books.

Were the works according Gods law, or not?

Only when it is proven, by what is written in the books, they didn't live according Gods Law, they will be condemned.

Nobody is condemned before it is clear what is written in the books.

There are also dead's who will not be condemned. Their names are written in the book of life. Those will get eternal life. Not in the same way the sons of God (we believers) have eternal life, but nevertheless it will be eternal life.

Again, there is much to say about this and that's what we are doing in other bible studies on this site.

I pray that Gods Word will fill your heart.