

BEFORE AND AFTER CHRIST

By Keith Greer

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." {Acts 3:19-21} Reading these passages reminds us of the need for a "**change**" in our life upon coming to Christ. Let us look at the "**Before and After**" of one who comes to Christ.

Before one comes to Christ, they are **outside in the world**. What condition are they in, spiritually speaking? "That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." {Ephesians 2:12} What a bleak picture for one's soul to be without hope, Christ, and God!

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." {John 8:24} Can one be saved if they died in their sins? Listen to the words of John, " Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." {Revelation 14:13} Clearly one that is outside of Christ is "in his sins!" Does a "**change**" need to occur?

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." {2 Corinthians 5:17} The "**old man**" must die, in order for the "**new man**" to be born. How does this transition take place? One must put to death the old man of sin, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them." {Colossians 3:5-7}

One needs the **spiritual birth**. "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." {Romans 6:4} The "**after**" takes place following baptism. How so? " In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." {Colossians 2:11,12} What takes away the sin? "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,..." {Ephesians 1:7}

One comes into contact with **the blood of Christ** in baptism! When one obeys God from the heart, Romans 6:17, the "**change**" takes place! One goes from the state of being "lost" to being saved! Acts 2:47.

After Christ, one has many things they did not enjoy, before Christ: **Spiritual blessings**, in Christ. Ephesians 1:3; **Reconciliation** in Him, Ephesians 2:11-16; **Works** that are remembered, 1 Thessalonians 1:3; **Completeness in Christ**, Colossians 2:10; **Citizenship** in heaven! Philippians 3:20. Man now has a "**living hope**", Hebrews 6:18,19.

Looking at the "**Before and After Christ**," one can surely see the benefits in the **AFTER**. This transformation process allows one to experience the joys of being a Christian. No greater change can one make. Yet, God made this a personal choice for all of us. None can make this great transition for another – but all have the opportunity to take the step! We pray all will make this transition – sooner rather than later. ***