

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 1

NEW BIRTH

Bible Memory Verses: John 3:3,5,6.

"In reply Jesus declared, I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God... I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit."

Let us see first of all why we must be 'born again' as Jesus said. Here is 'the picture', the situation spelt out; write out on a separate sheet the verses in brackets which explains 'the picture.'

God created all (Psalm 24:1). He has set standards which we must reach if we are to have fellowship with Him.

As we are all sinners, both by birth and practice (Romans 3:23), none of us could ever reach that standard, yet we were made of God (Colossians 1:16).

Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 1:3-4), Himself Divine. He left the Father's side and became a man like us (Hebrews 2:14), though without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

During His earthly life He did not meet God's standards (John 17:4). He offered himself on the cross as a sacrifice to God, taking the punishment that our sins deserved (2 Corinthians 5:21).

He was raised from the dead and ascended back to the Father (Ephesians 1:20). Now God offers salvation (a relationship with God) to all who will accept it as a free gift, purchased by the blood of Jesus, because the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

So we can see why Peter could say "and there is salvation in and through no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by and in which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 Amplified Bible).

How, then, do you become a Christian?

As our picture shows and our memory verses say, we need to be born into the family of God through Faith (believing) in the sacrifice that Jesus Christ has made on our behalf. This is clearly illustrated in John 1:12-13 which says "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, not of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

We can see, then, that we are NOT Christians because

1. We were born in a "Christian" country. Billy Graham once said "You may be born in a garage, but it doesn't make you into a motor car. The only spiritual

kingdom we are naturally born into is Satan's kingdom, the 'dominion of darkness'. (Colossians 1:13).

2. We have **Christian** parents. Spiritual life is not of flesh and blood, God has no grandchildren, only children, (John 3:6). Each generation needs to know God for itself.

3. We do our best and live a good life, we don't hurt anyone. The Bible teaches that salvation is "not because of works", (Ephesians 2:8-9). It isn't what we do or even what we refrain from doing that makes us Christian.

4. We were Christened or baptised as a baby. Scripture knows nothing of this and scripture is our guide (see PAPER 3).

5. We go through some ritual or share in a sacrament (baptism or breaking of bread). See Galatians 6:15 and Hebrews 10:11-14.

6. We join a church (1 John 2:19).

None of these things are effective, we need to be "born again." This is an inward, spiritual experience, an encounter with Jesus Christ which puts us into a right relationship with God as his children. People sometimes refer to it as "being saved", "getting converted" or being "born again." To have had such an experience is the most vital thing in the world for you as an individual. There are two parts to it: "repentance to God and... faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21). You receive this free gift when:

1. You see sin as the hindrance to being right with God.
2. Recognise the futility of your own efforts to win God's favour.
3. Determine with God's help, to forsake your sin - repentance.
4. Realise that Jesus is the ONLY way of salvation.
5. Recognise that trusting Him means submitting your life totally to Him as your Lord.
6. You receive Him personally, by faith, as your rescuer and Lord.

You now have ETERNAL LIFE!

You are SAVED!

You are BORN AGAIN!

You are in GOD'S FAMILY!

By faith in what God has promised - 2 Peter 1:3-4.

Write out and consider these Bible verses:-

John 9:16

John 5:24

Romans 10:9

What happens at the New Birth?

Here are a few of the wonderful things that happen. There are many more!

1. Born of God - see John 1:12-13 above.
2. A new creation - write out on separate sheet 2 Corinthians 5:17.
3. A new kingdom - write out also Colossians 1:13.
4. Passed from death to life - see John 5:24 above.
5. Redeemed (bought back) - 1 Peter 1:18-19: "You must know (recognise) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless, fruitless way of living inherited by tradition from your forefathers, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but you were purchased with the precious blood of Christ the Messiah, like that of a sacrificial lamb without blemish or spot." (Amplified Bible)
6. Saved from sin - write out Matthew 1:21, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14.
7. Fellowships with God and His children – 1 John 1:3 "What we have seen and ourselves heard we are also telling you, so that you too may realise and enjoy fellowship as partners and partakers with us, and this fellowship that we have, which is a distinguishing mark of Christian, is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ, the Messiah."