

When a person trusts in Christ, he is saved from the penalty and power of sin. This does not mean that he no longer commits sin. But it does mean that all his sins, past, present and future, have been forgiven; that he will never be judged for them; and that he has power to live for God instead of for the pleasures of sin.

In considering the subject of the forgiveness of sins, the student should always keep in mind that there are two principal types of forgiveness. The first of these is known as judicial forgiveness and the second as parental forgiveness. The first has to do with the penalty of sin, and the second has to do with the restoration of fellowship that is broken by sin.

When we say that the Christian has been forgiven all his sins - past, present and future - we are referring to the judicial forgiveness of sins. This means that the believer will never have to pay the penalty of his sins because Christ paid that penalty on the cross. When the Lord Jesus died, all our sins were in the future. Therefore, He died for all our sins - past, present, and future. The moment we trust Him as Saviour, we receive complete forgiveness of sins as far as the penalty is concerned.

What happens then when a Christian sins? The answer is that fellowship with God is broken. The happy spirit of communion between the Father and His child has been severed. Fellowship remains broken until that sin is confessed and forsaken. When we do confess these sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Here we are speaking about parental forgiveness. It is not a judge forgiving a criminal, but a father forgiving his child.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does the Bible say that all men have sinned? Why do we avoid God's explanation of sin's existence?
2. What did Satan, Adam, and Eve have in common? Explain.
3. Suppose someone should say that all children are born into the world sinless as Adam was at creation, and that they do not become sinners until they disobey God as Adam did. Is this true according to the Bible?
4. How has Christ paid the price for sin? Why was He able to do so?
5. What are some of the feelings of a Christian who is out of fellowship with God? How would **Psalm 32** or **1 John 1:9** help in this situation?

What the Bible Teaches - TEST 4 - Sin

(Use **EXAM FORM** on the website menu)

Indicate the letter of the correct answer.

- 1 Romans 3:23 describes sin as
 - (a) an act of rebellion against God
 - (b) deliberately doing what is wrong
 - (c) an act that breaks community laws
 - (d) any act that comes short of perfection
- 2 Sin includes
 - (a) breaking God's law
 - (b) rebellion against God
 - (c) moral impurity in thought as well as deed
 - (d) all the above
- 3 The first recorded sin in the universe had its roots in
 - (a) pride
 - (b) intemperance
 - (c) impure desire
 - (d) malice against the human race
- 4 The first recorded sin on the earth had its roots in
 - (a) unbelief and disobedience
 - (b) lust and immorality
 - (c) anger and frustration
 - (d) idolatry
- 5 Which of the following results of human sin did Adam and Eve manifest?
 - (a) they were conscious of nakedness and shame
 - (b) they made an effort to cover up their fallen condition
 - (c) they tried to hide from God
 - (d) they did all of the above
- 6 When did Adam die?
 - (a) physically, when he ate the fruit
 - (b) spiritually, the moment he sinned
 - (c) he did not die spiritually at all
 - (d) he went to heaven without dying
- 7 Which of the following do we inherit as human beings?
 - (a) sonship in God's universal family
 - (b) a divine spark which needs only to be fanned into flame to make us God's children
 - (c) a sinful nature which dooms us to die eventually
 - (d) the right to dictate to God the terms on which we expect to be saved from our sin
- 8 The "second death" which awaits the sinner is
 - (a) a myth and something not mentioned in the Bible
 - (b) physical death
 - (c) eternal banishment from God in conscious agony
 - (d) the "hell" we all experience at times in this life
- 9 God's remedy for sin is centred in
 - (a) the virgin Mary
 - (b) the Lord Jesus Christ
 - (c) ourselves
 - (d) the Church
- 10 God gives eternal life to those who
 - (a) do the best they can to overcome their evil natures
 - (b) are loving, charitable and kind
 - (c) join the church
 - (d) accept the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What is your attitude to the sin that you detect in your own life?

Lesson 5: CHRIST

This lesson concerns the Lord Jesus Christ who is the central theme of Holy Scripture. We shall consider His deity, His incarnation, His work and His offices.

HIS DEITY

The deity of Christ means that Christ is God. Scripture clearly teaches this important fact in the following ways.

The attributes of God are used in speaking of Christ.

- (a) His pre-existence. Christ has no beginning (John 17:5).
- (b) His omnipresence. He is with His servants everywhere (Matthew 28:20).
- (c) His omnipotence. He has unlimited power (Matthew 28:18).
- (d) His omniscience. He has unlimited knowledge (John 21:17).
- (e) His 'unchangeableness'. He is "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

The works of God were performed by Christ.

- (a) He created all things (John 1:3).
- (b) He upholds the universe (Colossians 1:16,17).
- (c) He raised Himself from the dead (John 2:19; 10:17,18).

The title of God is given to Christ.

- (a) God, the Father, addresses the Son as God (Hebrews 1:8).
- (b) Men called Him God, and He did not refuse their worship (John 20:28).
- (c) Demons recognised Him as God (Mark 1:24).
- (d) He declared Himself to be God (John 10:30).

HIS INCARNATION

By the incarnation of Christ is meant His coming into the world as a man.

The coming of Christ was predicted in the Old Testament (Isaiah 7:14).

2 History records the birth of our Lord. His birth was different from all other births.

- (a) He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35).
- (b) He was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23).
- (c) Yet He was truly man, possessing a body (Hebrews 10:5), soul (Matthew 26:38) and spirit (Luke 23:46).

Christ came in human form in order to:

- (a) Reveal the Father (John 14:9).
- (b) Put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26).
- (c) Destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

NOTE WELL:

One of the foundation truths of the Christian faith is that Jesus Christ is truly God and that He came into the world as a man by the miracle of virgin birth. As a man, He was absolutely sinless.

HIS WORK

Under this heading, we shall discuss the Lord's death, resurrection and ascension.

His death

(a) The death of Christ was necessary (John 3:14). It was part of God's eternal purpose (Hebrews 10:7). It was necessary to fulfil Old Testament prophecies (Isaiah 53:5). It was necessary to provide salvation for man (Ephesians 1:7).

(b) The death of Christ was for others. He died as a substitute (1 Corinthians 15:3).

(c) The death of Christ was sufficient. It completely meets God's claims because Christ endured and exhausted the judgement of God against sin. It completely meets man's need because it was the death of an Infinite Person, and therefore its value is infinite.

His resurrection

(a) The resurrection of Christ was necessary to fulfil prophecy, to complete the work of the Cross (Romans 4:25), and to enable Christ to undertake His present work in heaven.

(b) Christ's resurrected body was real. It was not a spirit (Luke 24:39). It was the same body which was crucified because it had the print of the nails and the spear-wound (John 20:27). Yet it was a changed body,

with power to overcome physical limitations (John 20:19,26).

(c) After His resurrection, Christ appeared to certain of His followers at least ten times. More than five hundred reliable witnesses saw Him after He arose (1 Corinthians 15:6)

(d) The resurrection of Christ is an important truth. If there was no resurrection, there would be no Christian faith.

His ascension

(a) At the end of His ministry on earth, Christ was carried up into heaven (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9).

(b) He ascended so that He might enter into His reward (Luke 24:26), and continue His ministry for His people (Hebrews 7:25).

HIS OFFICES

Christ is presented in Scripture as a Prophet, a Priest and a King.

1. As Prophet, He tells men what God has to say to them, and He thus reveals God to men (John 1:18).
2. As Priest, He represents believers before God (Hebrews 4:14 - 16).
3. As King, He reigns today in the hearts of those who are loyal to Him. In a coming day, He will reign upon the earth for one thousand years. Psalm 72 describes His reign on earth.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the ways the Bible describes Christ as being God?
2. How did Jesus Christ come into the world to become a man? How was He similar to men? How was He different from men?
3. How would He answer people who believe that there are other religions that provide other ways to God? How does your answer relate to Christ's words in **John 14:6**?
4. What is the importance of Christ's resurrection?
5. According to **Hebrews 4:1-16** Christ functions as our High Priest before God. How does this give special meaning and encouragement in your life today?

What the Bible Teaches - TEST 5 - Christ

(Use **EXAM FORM** on the website menu)

Indicate the letter of the correct answer.

- 1 The expression “the deity of Christ” means that
 - (a) Christ is divine in the same sense that all men are divine
 - (b) Christ is absolutely God in every sense of the word
 - (c) Christ is a true human being
 - (d) Christ is God manifest in flesh
- 2 The Lord Jesus
 - (a) has always existed
 - (b) was created by God before the worlds were made
 - (c) came into existence when He was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary
 - (d) always will exist although He did not exist prior to His birth at Bethlehem
- 3 The Lord Jesus
 - (a) knows everything about everything and everybody
 - (b) asked questions when He lived on earth, so He is not omniscient
 - (c) does not know anything about space technology or nuclear physics since these subjects were unknown in His day
 - (d) was wise and knows most things but not all things
- 4 The universe was brought into being
 - (a) as a result of natural causes
 - (b) by the genius and power of the Lord Jesus
 - (c) by an accidental accumulation of atoms
 - (d) in some way not revealed in the Bible
- 5 Which of the following is true?
 - (a) God the Father never addressed Jesus at His Son
 - (b) The Lord Jesus refused to allow men to worship Him as God as this would have been blasphemous
 - (c) The Lord Jesus claimed to be God
 - (d) during His life, demons always denied that Jesus was God
- 6 When Christ was born on earth
 - (a) He ceased to be God in order to become man
 - (b) He united in His own Person both deity and humanity
 - (c) He was not truly human because He was really God
 - (d) His true father was Joseph just as His true mother was Mary
- 7 As a man the Lord Jesus
 - (a) sometimes made mistakes just as other people do
 - (b) was without sin in thought, word and deed
 - (c) refused to have anything to do with sinners
 - (d) was exempt from temptation, pain and suffering and similar ills which befall mankind
- 8 The Lord Jesus died
 - (a) for sins that He had committed Himself
 - (b) not for His own sins, He was sinless, but as Substitute for our sins
 - (c) an untimely death because He was born before the world was ready for His lofty ideals
 - (d) because He was brave and wished to show men how to die for a noble cause
- 9 The Lord Jesus today is
 - (a) still in the tomb awaiting the day of resurrection
 - (b) alive from the dead and living in heaven
 - (c) unable to do anything for sinful men because His time to reign on the earth has not yet come
 - (d) no different from great religious teachers of the past.
- 10 Christ is presented to us in Scripture as Prophet, Priest and King. As **Priest**,
 - (a) He rules and reigns over the universe
 - (b) He tells men what God has to say to them
 - (c) He prays for all men
 - (d) He represents believers before God

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

In view of whom the Lord Jesus is and in view of what He has done, what is your attitude to Him?

Lesson 6: THE NEW BIRTH - Part 1

Assignment for this lesson: Read John 3:1-21

INTRODUCTION

The reader must be struck by the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, solemnly impressed upon a most religious and moral person named Nicodemus the absolute necessity for him to be born again, before he could see or enter the Kingdom of God (vv 3, 5). The new birth is one of the three great “musts” of all humanity.

The “must” of **death** (2 Samuel 14:14; Hebrews 9:27).

The “must” of the **judgement** (Romans 14:12; Revelation 20:11 - 15).

The “must” of **regeneration**, or the new birth (John 3:3,5).

In view of much ignorance and misunderstanding concerning this vital matter, let us first view it negatively. (see John 1:12,13).

WHAT THE NEW BIRTH IS NOT

- 1. It is not of natural generation or descent:** “not of blood”. Though one may be born of Christian parents, this does not constitute him/her a Christian.
- 2. Not of self-determination:** “will of the flesh”. Just as a child cannot will itself to be born physically, so no one can produce the new birth by his own efforts.
- 3. Not of human mediation:** “not of the will of man, but of God”. No human being, however eminent his ecclesiastical position, can impart the new birth to another. All the rites and ceremonies of any or of all organised religions can never produce the new birth.
- 4. Not a physical change:** Christ corrected Nicodemus’ misunderstanding as to this, and showed him it was a spiritual change (John 3:4-6).
- 5. Not a social and geographical change:** The born-again person is not suddenly translated to heaven, but continues to live on earth, but now to please his Lord and Saviour (1 Corinthians 7:20-24; Colossians 3:22-24).
- 6. Not an intellectual apprehension of what it is:** A person can be religiously educated, ordained to the ministry, and become a preacher without being born again. Sadly, there are many such. **Theoretically** they may know its necessity, yet know nothing of it by experience.
- 7. Not an evolutionary process:** It is not a gradual development of some germ of spiritual life that is within (Ephesians 2:5). Sinners are described as being spiritually **dead**. Life cannot be **developed** where it does not exist!
- 8. Not a reformation** or self-improvement by which outwardly bad habits are relinquished. It is not a change of **manners**, but of the **man**.
- 9. Not a religious belief:** It is possible to be sincere in one's religious convictions, be baptised, confirmed, join the church, take communion, teach a Sunday school class, occupy a church office, and even be a preacher, without being born again. The necessity for the new birth was stated to one of the most religious, sincere and moral men of his day (John 3:1).

IT IS A SPIRITUAL CHANGE

The new birth is a spiritual change (John 3:8). It is brought about by God alone, when we believe in Christ and receive Him as our Saviour and Lord (John 1:12-13).

Note: John 3:7, “Marvel not”. The necessity for the new birth is perfectly logical and reasonable, and should not cause amazement.

Now let us ask three questions regarding the new birth. **Why? How? When?** The first one is discussed below. The other two will be taken up in the next lesson.

WHY MUST A PERSON BE BORN AGAIN?

To receive a spiritual nature we naturally lack (John 3:6). Here the word “flesh” refers to that sinful nature which a person receives at his physical birth. Leave off the letter “H” and spell it backwards and its meaning will be seen i.e. “self”. Through his sin, Adam acquired a sinful nature, and this nature has been transmitted, by birth, to each of his descendants. (See Romans 5:12, 18, 19; Psalm 51:5). The character of this sinful nature

called “the flesh”, is described in Romans 8:5-8. It is “enmity against God, not subject (or obedient) to the law of God”, and consequently is incapable of pleasing God. In other words, man does not naturally possess a spiritual capacity which would enable him either to desire, understand or enjoy the things of God. (See 1 Corinthians 2:14).

Just as a musical, artistic or poetic capacity can only be communicated to a person by a physical birth, so a spiritual capacity, by which the things of God can be appreciated, must be communicated to a person by a spiritual birth. The flesh can be educated, cultivated and ‘religionised’; but its nature remains unchanged and unchangeable in its enmity to God, so by our very nature we cannot please God. The new birth is the impartation of a spiritual or Divine nature, by which alone man can possess this spiritual capacity to understand and enjoy the things of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh”. Like can only produce like!

To see and enter the Kingdom of God, which we cannot do naturally (see John 3:3-5). What is meant here by “the kingdom of God”? It is described as a **spiritual** experience. We read, “The Kingdom of God is not meat or drink (or physical), but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). Let us think of two kingdoms or spheres; one called “the kingdom of men”, and the other “the Kingdom of God”: or one called “the flesh”, and the other “the spirit”. Everyone enters the kingdom of men by a **physical birth**, which communicates to us a **physical nature**, and fits us for a **physical sphere**, peopled by human beings. In this sphere we live, move, think and act. Now how can we be enabled to see the value of and enter this other sphere called the Kingdom of God? The answer is obvious. We must be born again, or have a **spiritual birth**, which will introduce us into this new realm. Through this new birth we will become possessed of a spiritual nature which will fit us to enjoy the spiritual realities that characterise the Kingdom of God.

You will notice that the marginal rendering of the words “born again”, is “born from above”. This serves to indicate the source of the birth. Physical birth is of **man** and the **earth**; spiritual birth has its origin in **God** and is from **heaven**. Now read Romans 8:9.

Here Paul speaks to a people who were no longer “in the flesh” as to their position before God, but were “in the Spirit”. How were they translated from one kingdom to the other? By the Spirit of God, upon their acceptance of Christ as their Saviour.

To receive a spiritual life we do not naturally possess.

Man, by nature, is described as being “dead in (his) trespasses and sins”; “alienated from the life of God”; as “not having life”. (see Ephesians 2:1; 4:18; 1 John 5:11,12). Just as a body without **physical** life is declared to be physically dead, so any person without **spiritual** life is described in the Bible as being spiritually dead. (See 1 Timothy 5:6; Luke 15:24). Death therefore means separation. For a person to be separated from Christ, in Whom is life, is to be dead spiritually (John 1:4). How can this spiritual life be imparted to the spiritually dead? Let Christ Himself tell us. Read John 5:25 and the problem is solved. All who hear the Son of God, believe His Word and trust Him as their Saviour, receive spiritual life and are born again. See also John 3:16; 5:24; 10:26-28; 6:47; 1 John 5:13.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 The term ‘born again’ has become very popular everywhere. According to the Bible, can you explain what the new birth is and what it is not? How is the term ‘born again’ misused and misunderstood?
- 2 What would one expect to see in the life of a person who claims to be born again?
- 3 Why is it impossible to understand the things of God without the new birth (**Romans 8:5-6**)?
- 4 What is the difference between ‘the kingdom of men’ and the ‘kingdom of God’?
- 5 What are some of the differences between physical death and spiritual death?

What the Bible Teaches - TEST 6 - The New Birth (Part 1)

(Use **EXAM FORM** on the website menu)

Indicate the letter of the correct answer.

- 1 The doctrine of the new birth was first proclaimed by the Lord Jesus to
 - (a) an immoral woman
 - (b) a religious moral person
 - (c) a hated "publican" tax collector who was a traitor to his country and paid by Roman government
 - (d) a pagan idolater
- 2 The Lord Jesus told Nicodemus that he
 - (a) probably should be born again if he wanted to be sure of going to heaven
 - (b) should carefully examine his life to see whether or not he needed to be born again
 - (c) had to be born again if he wanted to enter God's kingdom
 - (d) did not need to be born again since he was such a good man
- 3 A person becomes a child of God
 - (a) by being born into a Christian family
 - (b) by having strong will power
 - (c) by virtue of a religious rite having been administered to him
 - (d) only by direct intervention of God in his life
- 4 The new birth involves
 - (a) reformation and self-improvement
 - (b) having a thorough religious education since only those who can understand the theology of regeneration can experience it
 - (c) a spiritual change wrought in the life by the Holy Spirit
 - (d) a gradual development of the germ of spiritual life which lies latent in each one of us
- 5 Which of the following guarantees that a person will be born again?
 - (a) being baptised
 - (b) joining the Church
 - (c) taking communion
 - (d) living a respectable life
 - (e) all of the above
 - (f) none of the above
- 6 The Lord told Nicodemus to "marvel not" that he needed to be born again. He meant by this that
 - (a) the new birth is entirely a natural process
 - (b) His teaching on the subject was logical and reasonable
 - (c) Nicodemus was rather inclined to over emphasize the marvellous and unusual
 - (d) Nicodemus was too well educated to be surprised at such teaching
7. The Lord's statement "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" has reference
 - (a) to the sinful nature we inherit by natural birth
 - (b) to the new nature we receive as a gift from God by spiritual birth
 - (c) our natural and innate capacity to desire, understand and enjoy the things of God
 - (d) the impossibility of our being saved if we do not first subdue the lusts of our hearts
- 8 When the Lord Jesus spoke of "the kingdom of God" in His conversation with Nicodemus, He was referring to
 - (a) the old kingdom of Judah which the Jews hoped He would soon revitalise
 - (b) the future kingdom He will one day set up on earth
 - (c) a spiritual kingdom into which we enter by means of the new birth
 - (d) all of the above
- 9 The marginal reading of the expression "born again" is "born from above". This teaches that
 - (a) the new birth takes place at death
 - (b) spiritual birth has its origin in God and is from Heaven
 - (c) a person enters God's kingdom when he learns to live on a higher plain than most people do
 - (d) a person must be reincarnated on earth many times before he finally arrives at the birth which makes him a child of God
- 10 Spiritual death and separation from God is the result of sin. Spiritual life is imparted to us
 - (a) only if and when we are prepared to try harder to please God
 - (b) only if our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds on the day of judgement
 - (c) only when we become spiritually minded enough to deserve it
 - (d) only by means of the new birth which takes place the moment we receive Christ as personal Saviour

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What impresses you most about the Lord's statement "You must be born again"?

Lesson 7: THE NEW BIRTH - Part 2

HOW CAN A PERSON BE BORN AGAIN?

Christ indicated a three-fold means by which the new birth is produced.

1. **By believing the Word of God** (John 3:5). The “water” here is the well-known symbol for the Word of God. (See Ephesians 5:25; John 15:3; Psalm 119:9). It has **no reference to baptism**. Other Scriptures make abundantly clear that the new birth comes through the Word of God (See 1 Peter 1:23-25; James 1:18). Just as water, when applied, cleanses from our eyes the dirt that would otherwise obscure our vision, so the Word of God, when read and believed, washes from our mind the wrong ideas about God and His salvation. The entrance of God’s Word brings light on our lost condition (Romans 3: 10-19); God’s love as seen in His provision for our salvation (John 3:16); and the way by which we may be saved (Romans 10: 1-17).
2. **By the indwelling of the Spirit of God** (John 3:5). The Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity, was sent by Christ, on His ascension, to use the Word of God to convince us of our sin; to lead us to put our trust in Christ; to indwell each person on believing; to communicate to the believer a Divine nature, or capacity for spiritual things; and to guide each born-again person into all truth. (See John 16:7-15; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; II Peter 1:3,4; Galatians 5:22-26). As the Word of God is read or heard, the Holy Spirit applies the truth to the heart in convicting force, showing the sinner that he is lost, guilty, helpless, and in a hopeless condition. He then reveals through the Word the way of salvation through repentance and faith in Christ and His finished work. The moment the sinner trusts in Christ in this way He seals him, by His indwelling presence, as Christ’s purchased possession. This is not a question of **feeling**, but of **fact**. We do not feel the new birth.
3. **By faith in the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ**. (See John 3:14-16). In these words Christ made crystal clear how this new life can come to a sinner. In answer to Nicodemus’ question: “How can these things be?” Christ used an incident recorded in the Old Testament to illustrate how the new birth could be experienced.

Now read Numbers 21:4-9. Seven words seem to sum up the incident. Let us give it our closest and most careful attention, for it is **Christ’s own illustration** of how the sinner can be born again.

(a) **Sin** (Numbers 21:5). Just as Israel sinned , so all humanity has sinned against God in thought, word and deed (Romans 3:23).

(b) **Judgement** (v6). As their sin brought God’s merited judgement upon them, so God has revealed His wrath against all sin. (See Romans 1:18; Job 36:18: Romans 6:23).

(c) **Repentance** (v7). Israel realised, confessed, and sought pardon for their sin. This is repentance, which consists of a change of mind, resulting in a change of attitude, which is expressed by a change of action. God demands the repentance of the sinner. (See Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30,31; 20:21; Mark 1:15).

(d) **Revelation** (v8). “And the Lord said”. As God revealed to Moses the way of salvation for these snake-bitten Israelites, so God has revealed in the Bible His way of salvation for us (2 Timo 3:15-17; Rom 10:8,9).

(e) **Provision** (vv8,9). A serpent of brass was made and lifted up on a pole in full view of the camp of Israel. Now compare John 3:14. Just as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent, so Christ must be lifted up on a cross to provide salvation for sin-bitten humanity. On the cross He bore our sins, took our place, endured all the judgement due to our sins, and by His death, satisfied all God’s demands against the sinner. God has indicated His acceptance of the substitutionary sacrifice of His Son by raising Him from the dead. (See Isaiah 53:5,6; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 5:7,8).

(f) **Condition** (v8). “When he looks”. The fact that the brazen serpent was lifted up did not, of itself, save them. Each bitten Israelite must **look to live!** The fact that Christ has died for our sins and accomplished all the work needed for our salvation will not save any sinner **unless he personally believes on Christ**, trusts Him as his own Saviour, and owns Him as the Lord of his life. This is what our Saviour meant when He said “that whoever believes in Him should have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Just as the bitten Israelites were not asked to pray, resolve, pay or do good works to merit salvation, so sinners are urged to own their need and trust wholly in the work of Christ, and receive Him by faith as their own personal Saviour. (See John

1:12; Acts 13:38, 39; Ephesians 2:8,9.)

(g) **Result** (v 9). “He lived”. The moment a bitten Israelite (who was as good as dead) looked, he received new life. He was, as it were born again! So the moment a guilty, lost sinner believes the gospel that Christ died for his sins, and definitely accepts Him as his own Saviour, he receives spiritual or eternal life, is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, becomes a partaker of a Divine nature, and is thus born from above, or regenerated. This is the new birth, which Christ declared was absolutely essential to seeing and entering the Kingdom of God.

WHEN CAN A PERSON BE BORN AGAIN?

The answer to this can be obtained by consulting your watch! The new birth takes place the moment a guilty sinner looks to Christ and trusts Him as his Lord and Saviour. Why not, just where you are, and as you are, cease from your own efforts to save yourself, and trust in the Person and rest in the work of the Son of God, who did it all for you. (See II Corinthians 6:1,2; Hebrews 4:7).

“Come as a sinner, and trust now in Christ,
Who bore your sins and shame;
Then, by the Spirit of God through the Word,
You will be born again!”

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What place does the Word of God have in the new birth or in being ‘born again’?
- 2 Jesus said, “I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” What is the meaning of the term ‘water’ as it is used in this passage (John 3:5)? Is it the same as baptism?
- 3 What part does the Holy Spirit play in our new ‘born again’ relationship to Jesus Christ? Can we understand the things of God without the Holy Spirit?
- 4 Is there a difference between feeling saved and knowing you are saved?
- 5 Have you experienced the new birth? Within the group, share your experience of coming to trust Christ.

What the Bible Teaches - TEST 7 - The New Birth (Part 2)

(Use **EXAM FORM** on the website menu)

Indicate the letter of the correct answer.

- 1 When the Lord said, "Except a man be born of water..." He was
 - (a) referring to Christian Baptism
 - (b) referring to the proselyte baptism as practiced by Jews whenever a Gentile embraced Judaism
 - (c) referring to the baptism for repentance associated with the ministry of John the Baptist
 - (d) not referring to baptism at all but was speaking in symbolic language of the Word of God
- 2 The role played by God's Word in bringing a person into God's family
 - (a) is mentioned only in John 3
 - (b) is that of making the sinner aware of his need for a new birth and revealing to him how new birth may be obtained
 - (c) has more to do with what happens after a person is born again than with what happens before he is born again
 - (d) is likened in the lesson to the role played by a mother in bringing about a natural birth
- 3 The Holy Spirit's work in bringing about the new birth in a person's life is to
 - (a) convince the sinner of his lost condition by means of the Word of God
 - (b) enlighten the understanding of the sinner so that he can see in Christ the Saviour that he needs
 - (c) enter the believer's heart and life in order to dwell there
 - (d) do all the above things
- 4 The new birth is based on
 - (a) the way we behave in our dealings with other people
 - (b) how we feel once we have taken the steps which bring it about
 - (c) a fact and not our feelings
 - (d) whether or not we fully understand the full theological implications of regeneration
- 5 When Nicodemus was told by the Lord Jesus that he needed to be born again his immediate reaction was to say
 - (a) "Why?"
 - (b) "How?"
 - (c) "Who?"
 - (d) "WHAT! Me?"
- 6 What illustration did Christ give of the new birth?
 - (a) a recent event in Jerusalem
 - (b) bringing sacrifices to the temple
 - (c) Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness
 - (d) it was a story told only to Nicodemus
- 7 Repentance consists of
 - (a) simply a change of mind
 - (b) a change of mind which results in a change of attitude
 - (c) a change of mind which results in a change of attitude which is expressed by a change of action
 - (d) doing penance
- 8 The lifting up of the brazen serpent on a pole was intended to
 - (a) lead the Israelites into snake worship
 - (b) teach the Israelites the value of making graven images as an aid to worship
 - (c) support the notion that Satan will ultimately be made to bear the blame for human sin
 - (d) symbolise the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross thus to provide salvation for sinful men
- 9 In the illustration the Lord Jesus gave to Nicodemus, the Israelite was saved from death
 - (a) when he looked in faith to the brazen serpent in obedience to God's Word
 - (b) when he understood exactly how a brazen serpent on a pole could heal him
 - (c) when he realised how to cure himself
 - (d) if he happened to be a relative of Moses
- 10 The salvation Christ has procured for sinners works
 - (a) when we understand all that is involved in His death, burial and resurrection
 - (b) the moment we look to Him in simple faith and trust Him to save us from our sin
 - (c) only if we trust both Him and our own efforts for salvation
 - (d) for everyone regardless of whether or not they personally look to Him in faith for salvation

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

In what or in whom are you trusting for salvation from personal sin?

Lesson 8: SALVATION

Closely linked with the subject of the new birth is that of salvation. The former concerns itself principally with the necessity, source and **nature** of the spiritual life all men need from God; the latter emphasises the delivering **effects** and **scope** of God's provision in Christ. We shall think of seven things in connection with salvation.

ITS DEFINITION

The word simply means deliverance. It is commonly used to describe the act by which a person is delivered from a danger which threatens him. We speak of a person being "saved" from drowning, or from a burning building, or from a sinking ship. In each case, three things are taken for granted.

1. The person to be saved was in danger of death.
2. Someone saw his peril and went to his rescue.
3. The rescue was successful in his mission and delivered the person from his perilous plight, and this "saved" him. The words: "save", "saved", "Saviour", and "salvation" occur very many times in the Bible and have exactly the same meaning in a **spiritual** sense.

ITS NECESSITY

The necessity for God's salvation is due to two facts which each person must face.

1. The fact of man's sin. We have already discussed the spiritual condition of all men by nature in our previous lesson, and pointed out that each human being comes into the world possessed of a sinful nature that constitutes him a sinner by birth. This sinful nature, in time, is evidenced by sinful thoughts, words, deeds and attitude of enmity to God. The Bible makes this abundantly clear. (Read Romans 5:12, 18, 19; 6:16; 8:5-8; Genesis 6:5; Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:3,4; Isaiah 53:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:20-23; Romans 1:21-32; 3:19-23). These verses quite clearly teach us that we are all sinners by birth, by choice and by practice. We need to be forgiven. It will be evident to all from these scriptures that man is:

- (1) A sinner, needing forgiveness.
- (2) Lost, needing to be found.
- (3) Doomed, needing deliverance.
- (4) Guilty, needing pardon.
- (5) Spiritually dead, needing life.
- (6) Blind, needing illumination.
- (7) A slave, needing liberation.

Man is thus utterly helpless to save himself.

2. The fact of God's righteousness. God is holy, and must punish sin. He will "by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 34:6,7). He has revealed his hatred of sin, and His sentence against all who die in their sins. This is eternal banishment from His presence. (See John 8:21,24; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:22-31; Jude 11-13; Revelation 20: 11-15). The obvious conclusion is: Since man is a sinner, and God is righteous, the sinner needs to be delivered or saved from the penalty of his sins. His cry should be: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30-31).

ITS PROVISION

The Gospel is the good news that God in wondrous grace has abundantly provided this salvation through the Person and the work of His beloved Son. Two things are clearly taught.

1. Christ came to be the Saviour of sinners (Matthew 1:21). The Son of God, equal and eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, became incarnate in order to provide salvation. (Read John 3:16,17; Mark 10:45; Matthew 9:12,13; John 10: 11, 15-18).

2. Through Christ's death and resurrection, this salvation has been provided, to God's complete satisfaction. As Christ willingly hung upon the cross, He assumed the full liability of our guilt and sin, bore our sins in His own body, and died as a substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of sinners. All God's judgement against sin fell on him, and all God's righteous claims against the sinner were fully satisfied by Christ's death on our behalf. God indicated His complete acceptance of this sacrifice of Christ by raising Him from the dead and seating him at His own right hand. (Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:5; Romans 5: 6,9; Acts 4:10-12; 5:31; 17:31).

ITS CONDITION

Since Christ has accomplished, by the sacrifice of Himself, **all the work needed** for the sinner's salvation, what must the sinner do in order to experience this salvation?

1. **He must repent.** Repentance simply consists of change of **mind** which results in a change of **attitude** towards sin, self, the Saviour and salvation; which, in turn, is evidenced by a change of **action**. (Read Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; 20:21). The sinner's indifference will give place to an earnest desire for salvation; his pride to humility; his self-satisfaction to a frank confession of his helpless, hopeless and hell-deserving condition.

2. **He must believe the gospel**, or the testimony of God concerning the Person and work of Christ. (See 1 John 5:9,10). As a lost and guilty sinner he must believe that Christ died for him, individually, that Christ bore his sins, took **his** place and, by His death, accomplished all the work needed for **his** salvation (Romans 4:5).

3. **He must accept the Lord Jesus Christ, by a definite act of his will as his own personal Saviour, henceforth to own Him as the supreme Lord of his life** (John 1:12; Romans 10: 9,10; John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47; Ephesians 1:13). This is the crucial act. Will you not, right from your heart, say: "Lord Jesus Christ, owning myself to be a guilty, lost sinner, but believing that You bore my sins and died in my place on Calvary, I now definitely rest in Your finished work and receive Thee as my own Saviour, henceforth to own You as the Lord and Master of my life". This is what it means to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:31).

ITS ASSURANCE

How may one know, for certain, that he is saved? We answer without any hesitation: by the Word of God. God declares plainly and in black and white, that every soul trusting in His Son is forgiven, saved, the possessor of eternal life and secure for ever. (Read Acts 13:38; 1 John 2:12; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 John 5:13; Romans 5:1; 8:1; John 10:27-30).

ITS SCOPE

Salvation has a three-fold aspect: past, present and future.

1. **Past.** Salvation from sin's **penalty**, or **consequences**. Since Christ has endured the full penalty due to our sins, the believer is delivered from its dread consequences. (See John 5:24; Romans 8:1).

2. **Present.** Salvation from sin's **power**, or **control**. Because of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence, plus the impartation of a Divine nature, the believer is now enabled to enjoy deliverance from the dominion of sin in his life (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Peter 1:3,4; Romans 6:1-14). This does not mean that the believer is incapable of sin; far from it, for he still possesses the evil nature called "the flesh". It does mean, however, that, in the measure that he avails himself of the means God has provided, sin shall not be the dominating factor in his life. This present deliverance will depend on:

- a. the reading and study of and obedience to the Word of God (II Timothy 2:15).
- b. The keeping constantly in touch with God by prayer (Hebrews 4:14-16).
- c. The yielding of one's body to God for both a righteous and useful life (Romans 6:13; 12:1,2).
- d. The prompt confession to God and the forsaking of all known sin (1 John 1:8,9; Titus 2:11-15).

3. **Future.** Salvation from sin's **presence**, or **committal**. This will take place at the coming of Christ, when He will raise the dead and change the living, so that they will have bodies incapable of sin, decay and death. This is the final aspect of salvation that we look for (Hebrews 9:28, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

ITS RESULTS

These are multitudinous (Ephesians 1:3-14). We shall select a few.

1. **Peace with God** (Romans 5:1). No longer at enmity.
2. **Acceptance before God in Christ** (Ephesians 1:6).
3. **Joy in God as His children** (Romans 5:10, 11; 8:14-17; Galatians 3: 26-4:7).
4. **Living for God** (2 Corinthians 5:14,15; Galatians 2:20; 1 Peter 4:2-5).
5. **Service to God** in the way of good works and testimony for Him (Eph 2:10; Matthew 5:16; Mark 16: 15,16).
6. **Worship, praise and prayer unto God** (John 4:23,24; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22; 13-15).
7. **An eternal home in heaven** (John 14:1-3; Revelation 22:1-5).

May each reader know, on the authority of the Word of God, that he/she is eternally saved!

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Why does man need salvation? Do you believe most people realise their sinful condition?
- 2 How did Christ provide salvation by His death and resurrection?
3. What is involved in biblical repentance?
- 4 What is eternal security? How can a person have this security?
- 5 Are you pleased to think that you can have peace with God, acceptance into His family, and an eternal home in heaven? How can the knowledge of these things affect our lives today?

What the Bible Teaches - TEST 8 - Salvation

(Use **EXAM FORM** on the website menu)

Indicate the letter of the correct answer.

- 1 When distinguishing between “the new birth” and “salvation” we note that
 - (a) “the new birth” and “salvation” are synonymous terms with identically the same meaning
 - (b) “the new birth” and “salvation” have nothing in common at all
 - (c) “the new birth” deals with the need, nature and source of spiritual life while “salvation” emphasises its scope and effects
 - (d) “the new birth” deals with the scope and effects of spiritual life while “salvation” deals with its need, nature and source
- 2 The word “salvation”
 - (a) normally means “deliverance” but, in the Bible, it means something else entirely
 - (b) has exactly the same meaning in a spiritual sense as it does in its ordinary, everyday sense
 - (c) is usually used in the Bible in a highly specialised sense and always has to do with being saved from physical harm or danger
 - (d) is rarely used in the Bible at all
- 3 The Bible teaches that we are
 - (a) sinners by birth
 - (b) sinners by choice
 - (c) sinners by practice
 - (d) sinners by birth, choice and practice
- 4 Acts 17:30 tells us that
 - (a) God will ultimately save all men regardless of their attitude towards Him because God is love
 - (b) God commands all men everywhere to repent
 - (c) God turns a blind eye towards men’s sins
 - (d) God’s attitude towards the sins of the Jews, His “chosen people”, is much different from His attitude towards the sins of the rest of mankind
- 5 Which of the following Scriptures show us how wicked our hearts really are?
 - (a) Genesis 6:5
 - (b) Jeremiah 17:9
 - (c) Mark 7: 20-23
 - (d) all the above
- 6 God’s righteous claims against the sinner
 - (a) are satisfied by our repentance
 - (b) are satisfied by our good deeds
 - (c) are satisfied by Christ’s death
 - (d) cannot be satisfied
- 7 Before a person can be saved he must first
 - (a) conquer his bad habits
 - (b) turn over a new leaf
 - (c) personally accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour by a definite act of the will
 - (d) read the Bible through from cover to cover
 - (e) fast, pray and do penance
- 8 Assurance of salvation depends on
 - (a) believing what God says about it in His Word
 - (b) whether or not we actually feel saved
 - (c) which church we join once we have accepted Christ
 - (d) whether or not we have a spectacular conversion.
- 9 Once a person is saved he
 - (a) can be lost again if he fails to live up to the standards of holiness demanded by God
 - (b) will never sin again
 - (c) can enjoy deliverance from sin’s power
 - (d) is free to please himself as to how he lives the rest of his life on earth
- 10 Which of the following is not necessarily a result of salvation?
 - (a) the believer has no more problems
 - (b) the believer has peace with God
 - (c) the believer is assured of a home in heaven
 - (d) the believer can now acceptably serve God

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Have you been saved? Is so, say briefly how it happened.

Lesson 9: GRACE

INTRODUCTION

All God's dealings with mankind at the present time are on the basis of grace. This means that He shows men favour which they do not deserve.

The word **grace** is found over 160 times in the Bible. Of these occurrences, 128 are in the New Testament. God is spoken of as "the God of all grace" (1 Peter 5:10). Christ is described as being "full of grace" (John 1:14). The Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29). Thus the three persons of the Godhead are closely linked with grace.

DEFINITION

The word used in the Old Testament carries the meaning "to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior". The New Testament word means, "favour, good-will, loving kindness". The following definitions have proved helpful in explaining what grace is:

1. "Grace is love displayed to unworthy objects. God is love; but when He bestows that love on guilty, unclean rebellious sinners, then it is grace".
2. "Love that looks up is adoration. Love on its own level is affection. Love that descends is grace".
3. "Grace is God showing nothing but love and mercy when we deserved nothing but wrath and judgement. It is God bending toward us in infinite love".
4. "Grace is seen in God giving heaven's Best to save earth's worst".

CONTRAST

Grace is not to be confused with works. If man could obtain salvation by doing good works, then salvation would simply be his wages (Romans 4:4,5; Romans 11:6). God does not owe anything to man. Salvation is a free gift.

Grace is not to be confused with law. Men are not saved by keeping the law. They are saved by grace. The following will help to make this clear:

(a) Law says, "Do this and you shall live". Grace says, "Live, and you shall do".

(b) Law says, "You shall love the Lord, your God". Grace says, "God so loved the world" (John 3:16) and "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

(c) Law condemns the best (Romans 3:19). Grace saves the worst (Romans 3:24; 4:5).

(d) Law reveals sin (Romans 3:20). Grace reveals salvation (Titus 2:11-13).

THE NEED FOR GRACE

Man is a sinful rebel against God's holy law (Romans 3:23; Colossians 1:21). Therefore, he deserves nothing but God's judgement.

Man stands guilty before the bar of God, having broken God's holy law (Romans 3:19; Galatians 3:10; James 2:10). As such, he is subject to the curse of God.

Because he rejected and murdered God's Son, man has no claim on God at all (John 12:31-33; 3:18).

SALVATION BY GRACE

If man is to be saved, it must be by God's grace. But God is holy and He cannot overlook sin. Sin must be punished.

The Gospel tells us how God can save sinners by grace, and still be holy in doing so. Christ suffered the wrath and judgement of God against sin. On the basis of the work of Christ, God can forgive the sins of those who trust the Lord Jesus.

Christ has finished the work. Grace only demands faith on the part of the sinner who seeks salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9).

BLESSINGS THROUGH GRACE

Grace brings many wonderful results to the sinner. Three of the greatest of these results are the following:

1. Salvation (Titus 2:11-13). This means that a Christian has eternal life.

2. Justification (Romans 3:24-26). This means that God reckons a sinner who has believed on Christ as being blameless.
3. Standing before God (Romans 5:2). This means that a true believer can enter into God's presence by prayer. He is no longer separated from God by his sins.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Discuss the meaning of 'grace'. Why does man deserve or not deserve God's grace?
- 2 Discuss the place of 'works' in the matter of salvation. Are works for salvation or a result of salvation? Explain.
- 3 Contrast 'law and 'grace' and show the folly of trying to reach God by works.
- 4 Discuss as a group how you can demonstrate 'grace' in your everyday living.
- 5 Through Christ's death, discuss how grace demands only faith from sinners who seek salvation.

(Questions for the individual to answer are below)

What the Bible Teaches - TEST 9 - Grace

(Use **EXAM FORM** on the website menu)

Indicate the letter of the correct answer.

- 1 God's dealings with men today are on the basis of
 - (a) law
 - (b) conscience
 - (c) grace
 - (d) promise
 - (e) all the above
- 2 "Grace" as the word is used in the Bible, may be defined as
 - (a) getting from God exactly what we deserve
 - (b) a little prayer to be said before meals
 - (c) the poise and charm which make some people more attractive than other people
 - (d) unmerited favour
- 3 Grace is a characteristic of
 - (a) God the Father only
 - (b) God the Son only
 - (c) God the Holy Spirit only
 - (d) all three Persons of the Godhead
- 4 God's attitude towards sinners is one of
 - (a) anger and resentment
 - (b) complete indifference
 - (c) love and compassion
 - (d) aloof condescension
- 5 On which of the following grounds does God make salvation available to man? On the basis that
 - (a) man can earn his salvation by good works
 - (b) man can merit salvation by keeping God's law
 - (c) man can accept salvation as free gift
 - (d) man can acquire salvation by a mixture of grace and works
- 6 Which of the following breathes the spirit of grace?
 - (a) "this do and thou shalt live"
 - (b) "thou shalt love and Lord thy God"
 - (c) "we love Him because He first loved us"
 - (d) "the soul that sinneth it shall die"
- 7 Which of the following is true?
 - (a) Man has no claim on God at all
 - (b) Man deserves to be saved
 - (c) God owes it to man to save him
 - (d) Sin is an error of mortal mind
- 8 The unsaved man
 - (a) will be saved by God's grace even though he never responds to that grace
 - (b) is under the curse of God for having broken God's law and therefore needs desperately to respond to God's grace
 - (c) can in no way be held accountable for the rejection and murder of God's Son
 - (d) cannot possibly be judged by God for his sin otherwise God would cease to be a God of grace
- 9 God can save sinners by grace and still be holy in doing so
 - (a) because Christ has taken the sinner's place and suffered God's wrath against sin
 - (b) because God can do anything he pleases without regard to inconsistencies which may arise from his actions
 - (c) because sin is not nearly so serious a matter as we sometimes claim it to be
 - (d) because God is a Trinity and this takes care of the problem
- 10 When a person accepts Christ as Saviour he is reckoned by God to be blameless. This is what is called in the Bible
 - (a) forgiveness
 - (b) justification
 - (c) sanctification
 - (d) redemption

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

How has God shown grace to you?

Lesson 10: FAITH

One does not study the Bible very long before becoming conscious of the importance of faith. A sinner cannot be saved apart from faith (Hebrews 4:2; Ephesians 2:8,9). Therefore it is important that we should find out what this word means.

WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is personal confidence. We use the word in everyday conversation, as follows: “I have complete faith in my doctor”. We mean that we trust him with our case. So, in the Bible, faith is personal confidence in God. It means that we believe what he says, and trust Him to save us and keep us.

WHERE DOES FAITH COME FROM?

As we look around us in the world, we realise that some men do not have faith in God, and thus they are not saved. This leads us to enquire as to the source of faith. In a very real sense, this faith is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2). God gives men the power to believe on Him.

But how does a man receive faith? The answer to this is found in Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”. Therefore, if a man does not have faith in God, he should read the Bible. As he reads he should pray somewhat as follows: “God, if this Book is Your Word, if Jesus Christ is Your Son, and if He died for me, then show me these things as I read the Bible”. God has promised that any man who wishes to do His will, will come to a knowledge of the truth (John 7:17).

WHAT IS THE TRUE OBJECT OF FAITH?

Faith must have an object. This object may either be a person, such as a relative, or a friend, or it may be an inanimate thing, such as an aeroplane, or a lift.

It is not enough to have faith. Faith must be placed in a trustworthy object. A man may have faith in his car to take him to a certain place, but if the car is badly in need of repairs, he will soon find that his faith has been misplaced.

The Bible sets forth the Lord Jesus Christ as the true object of faith (Acts 20:21). The important thing is not how much faith a man has, or what kind of faith he has, but whether his faith is in Christ. If it is, then the man is saved.

A man may believe all that the Bible says about Christ and yet not have faith in Him. You may believe that a certain train will leave the station at 11 a.m. and that it will arrive at a distant city at 3 p.m. You may believe all the facts about the train; yet you do not really believe in the train, until you get on board, and trust the train to take you to your destination.

So you may believe that Christ was born in Bethlehem, that He died on Calvary, that He rose again and ascended into heaven. But you have not really put your faith in Him until you trust Him to save you from your sins and take you to heaven.

EXAMPLES OF FAITH

The Scriptures are filled with examples of faith. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews has been called the “Honour Roll of Faith” because it lists some outstanding men and women who had faith.

Two other instances might be cited. The first is the faith of the centurion in Matthew 8:5-10. The centurion believed that Christ could heal his servant by merely saying the word.

The other is the faith of the woman of Canaan (Matthew 15:22-28). She pleaded that the bread reserved for the chosen Jews should be given to her, a Gentile. Her faith was humble and persistent.

THE REWARD OF FAITH

True faith never goes unrewarded. No one has ever trusted God in vain. Every seeking sinner who has repented of his sins, and who has put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ has been saved.

The Saviour said, “The one who comes to me, I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37).

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Define faith. Define by examples how we exercise faith in our daily life.
- 2 Read Romans 10:17 and then explain how we can reach faith. Relate faith to hearing and learning to the Word of God.
- 3 How is our faith in Christ superior to faith in a preacher, church or an organisation?
4. Discuss an example of faith in the Word of God.
- 5 How does God reward faith? Read and discuss Hebrews 11.

What the Bible Teaches - TEST 10 - Faith

(Use **EXAM FORM** on the website menu)

Indicate the letter of the correct answer.

- 1 A sinner cannot be saved apart from
 - (a) good works which merit him salvation
 - (b) the sacraments of the Church
 - (c) faith in the Lord Jesus
 - (d) all the above
- 2 What does Ephesians 2:8-9 tell us?
 - (a) we can save ourselves
 - (b) we cannot be saved
 - (c) we are saved by grace through faith
 - (d) we can boast in our works
- 3 Faith to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour
 - (a) comes from within ourselves
 - (b) comes from God through His Word
 - (c) is the common inheritance of all men
 - (d) is brought about by going to Church and taking Communion
- 4 Which of the following Scriptures tells us exactly how we receive faith to believe?
 - (a) John 3:16
 - (b) Acts 20:21
 - (c) Romans 10:17
 - (d) Ephesians 1:17
- 5 The difference between the everyday faith we exercise all the time (as, for example, faith in our doctor or banker) and **saving** faith lies in
 - (a) the degree of faith we have
 - (b) the object of our faith
 - (c) the kind of faith we have
 - (d) the purpose for our faith
- 6 For those who wish to be saved, the true object of faith is
 - (a) the Church
 - (b) the Bible
 - (c) the Lord Jesus Christ
 - (d) the priest, Pastor or Bible teacher to whom they look for instruction
- 7 If a person simply believes all the Bible says about Christ, he is
 - (a) saved forever
 - (b) not necessarily saved
 - (c) very unwise to say the least
 - (d) likely to believe anything
- 8 In Hebrews 11 numerous examples of faith are given. Which of the following was saved by faith from the judgement God poured out on mankind?
 - (a) Abel
 - (b) Enoch
 - (c) Noah
 - (d) Abraham
- 9 Whose faith greatly impressed the Lord Jesus?
 - (a) the centurion's for he believed in the power of Christ's word
 - (b) the Canaanite woman's for she would not be discouraged
 - (c) both of the above
 - (d) neither of the above
- 10 How many repentant sinners who have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have been saved as a result?
 - (a) a few of them
 - (b) many of them
 - (c) most of them
 - (d) all of them

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

How has this lesson helped you?

Lesson 11: HEAVEN AND HELL

Men have always had a sincere interest in the future. This interest has aroused questions such as the following: Does death end all? Where are the dead? What can we know about heaven and hell? First, we shall consider the questions:

WHAT HAPPENS TO A MAN AT THE TIME OF DEATH?

At the outset, we need to remember that man is a tripartite being, that is, he is composed of three parts - body, soul and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The first part is material being, the other two are non-material. With a spirit, man is capable of God-consciousness; with a soul he is capable of self-consciousness; with a body, he is capable of world consciousness. Only God's Word can divide between the soul and the spirit (Hebrews 4:12).

At the time of death, the soul and spirit leave the body. The body is put into the grave. In the case of believers, the body is described as sleeping (Acts 7:59, 60;8:2), while the unsaved person's body is spoken of as dead. The soul and spirit never sleep. The believer's soul and spirit go to a place of joy and happiness - heaven (II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:21,23). The soul of the unbeliever goes to a place where he will experience the torment and sorrow of having desires which he cannot attain. Read the important passage in Luke 16:19-31, showing that those who die are conscious in this intermediate state - **Hades**. Here the soul is spoken of as a person, having eyes, tongue, ears, fingers and memory, and a full knowledge of the conditions there.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HELL?

The Bible tells of another place of torment, distinct and different from Hades. It is called **HELL**, and is described as the Lake of Fire. At the Judgement of the Great White Throne, which will be discussed in the next lesson, the souls in Hades will be united to their bodies, which are to be raised from the graves. Christ will then pronounce the final sentence of judgement on the unbelieving dead, and they will be cast into the Lake of Fire—the eternal abode of the lost (Revelation 20:11-15). Hades is like a city prison cell where the prisoner temporarily awaits his sentence. The Lake of Fire is like a state prison, from which a person serving life sentence has no hope of discharge. In describing HELL, our Lord used the word GEHENNA, the burning place for rubbish, and talked of the undying worm and the unquenchable fire—a place of conscious torment and suffering (Mark 9:43-48).

Is punishment for sin eternal? In the book of Revelation, the phrase “forever and ever” is used to describe the misery of the lost (Revelation 14:11).

Can a God of love allow men to go to hell?

God does not want men to perish. He provided for man's salvation through the work of His Son on Calvary's Cross (Romans 5:6,8). If men reject the Saviour, they go to hell by their own choice.

God is a God of love (1 John 4:8), but He is also holy (1 Peter 1:16). He must punish sin.

Men do not hesitate to put sick people in hospitals, criminals in jail, or corpses in the cemetery. This does not indicate a lack of love on their part.

What about the heathen who has never heard the Gospel? Like the rest of mankind, heathens are lost sinners, and only Christ can save them. They can tell that there is a God through the works of creation (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1), and through their own consciences (Romans 2:15). If they live up to the light which they have, God will give them more light—see Cornelius, Acts 10 and 11.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HEAVEN?

The Scriptures clearly teach that there is a place of bliss for all who know and love our Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven is a place. The word is used in the Bible in three different ways. First of all, the region of the clouds is called heaven (Genesis 1:8). Then the area where the stars are located is known as heaven (Genesis 1:17). Finally, the word is used to describe God's dwelling place. Paul calls this the “third heaven” and “Paradise” (2 Corinthians 12: 2-4). Heaven is always mentioned as being “up”. Satan said, in Isaiah 14:13,14, “I will ascend into the heaven”.

We know that our Lord is in heaven today. After He was raised from the dead, He ascended in a body of flesh

and bones. He carried glorified humanity into heaven. Read Luke 24:38,39,51; 1 Peter 3:22; Hebrews 1:3).

There is a great host of believers in heaven, for when the true Christian dies, he is “absent from the body - present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). These believers are enjoying the presence of Christ “which is far better” (Philippians 1:23).

What is heaven like? The writers of the Scriptures could not find language that would describe it. In Revelation 21:10-27, John describes the foundations, wall, gates, and street of the heavenly city. Our hearts are attracted by its beauty. We know that there will be no sickness, sorrow, tears, pain or death in that fair place (Revelation 21:4). But best of all, the Lord Jesus Christ will be there, and He will be the supreme delight of every believer’s heart.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Define the body, soul and spirit of men as it relates to death of a believer and a non-believer.
- 2 What does Luke 16:19-31 tell us about how we should live our lives while we have the chance?
- 3 As defined by the text, discuss Hades and Hell as relates to the unbeliever.
- 4 What about those who have never heard of Christ? Can they be saved?
- 5 What is the fate of a believer after death? An unbeliever? Where is heaven and what is it like? Is there a heaven now or is it something in the future?

What the Bible Teaches - TEST 11 - Heaven and Hell

(Use **EXAM FORM** on the website menu)

Indicate the letter of the correct answer.

- 1 The God consciousness of an individual is centred
 - (a) in his soul
 - (b) in his spirit
 - (c) in his senses
 - (d) in all three of the above

- 2 When a person dies
 - (a) his soul goes to sleep
 - (b) his spirit goes to sleep
 - (c) his body returns to dust and his soul and spirit are extinguished
 - (d) his body “sleeps” if he is a believer but, if he is an unbeliever, his body is said to be dead

- 3 When a believer dies
 - (a) his soul and spirit go temporarily to purgatory to be cleansed of venial sin
 - (b) he goes at once to be with Christ
 - (c) he loses consciousness until the second coming of Christ
 - (d) he goes to the same place as the unbeliever

- 4 Hades is
 - (a) a place of conscious torment
 - (b) identical with the Lake of Fire
 - (c) what the Bible calls “an old wives’ tale,” that is, a myth
 - (d) where the lost will spend eternity

- 5 The Lord Jesus
 - (a) said nothing about Hades
 - (b) said nothing about Hell
 - (c) said nothing about either Hades or Hell
 - (d) spoke solemnly of both Hades and Hell as being fearful realities

- 6 How long will those who are lost stay in the lake of fire?
 - (a) until they are purified for heaven
 - (b) until they have paid for their sins
 - (c) until the judgement day
 - (d) for ever and ever

- 7 The existence of such a place as Hell is
 - (a) inconsistent with the Bible revelation of God as a God of love
 - (b) contrary to reason and therefore cannot possibly really exist at all
 - (c) an unpleasant truth and therefore best dismissed from the mind
 - (d) what prompted God to provide a way of escape through the death of His Son

- 8 The heathen
 - (a) will all be in heaven because they have never had a chance to hear the Gospel
 - (b) will be dealt with by God according to their response to the light they have
 - (c) have no possible way of knowing that there is a true and living God
 - (d) have no possible way of knowing right from wrong

- 9 When the Bible speaks of a “third heaven” it refers to
 - (a) Paradise, the dwelling place of God
 - (b) the atmosphere of the earth
 - (c) the stratosphere
 - (d) outer space where the stars are located

- 10 The great attraction of heaven for the believer is that
 - (a) there is no more sorrow or suffering there
 - (b) our loved ones will be there
 - (c) Jesus is there
 - (d) a beautiful city, the New Jerusalem, is there

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Where will you spend eternity? How do you know?

Lesson 12: FUTURE EVENTS

Every Bible student is thrilled to be able to read about events that are still future. Only in the Bible is the future unfolded. In this lesson, we shall consider some of these events in the order in which we believe they will happen. (See section on “other views” at the end of this lesson).

CHRIST’S COMING FOR HIS SAINTS (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

The next event to occur is the coming of Christ to take His people home to heaven. This is known as the Rapture. Christ will descend from heaven. The bodies of believers who have died will be raised. Living believers will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. Note the following facts about the coming of Christ:

1. It may happen at any moment (Revelation 22:7).
2. Only those who are truly saved will participate (1 Corinthians 15:23)
3. It takes place instantly — “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52).
4. Not all believers will die but all will be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51). They shall be like Christ (1 John 3:2; Romans 8:16-25).

THE TRIBULATION (Matthew 24:5-31).

After the Rapture, the earth will experience a period of great suffering and sorrow known as the Tribulation. During this period, the Jewish people will continue to return to the land of Palestine in unbelief. A great, evil ruler will arise known as Anti-Christ (meaning against Christ). He will demand worship from the people. It will be a time of such great suffering that unless the days were shortened, no life would survive. However, God will preserve those Jewish people who have been faithful to Him.

CHRIST’S COMING TO REIGN (Malachi 4:1-3)

Toward the end of the Tribulation period, the Lord Jesus Christ will come back to earth in great power and glory. He will destroy His enemies, including Anti-Christ, and judge those nations which persecuted the faithful Jews. Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit for a 1000 years.

THE MILLENNIUM (Isaiah 32:1; 35:1-7; 65:17-25)

When the work of judgement has been completed, Christ will set up His kingdom on the earth. Jerusalem will be His capital. He will reign upon the earth for a thousand years. This period is known as the millennium. It will be an era of peace and happiness. We read that nature will be entirely different, for the wolf will lie down with the lamb. The desert will blossom like the rose. Men will live to very old ages. It will be a time of great prosperity. There will be no wars. Although sin will not be entirely absent, it will be punished immediately whenever it occurs.

THE JUDGEMENT OF THE GREAT WHITE THRONE (Revelation 20: 11-15)

At the end of Christ’s thousand year reign, the Judgement of the Great White Throne will take place. This is the judgement of the unbelieving dead. No true believer (saved person) will be there. These souls come from Hades (see Lesson 11) and will be reunited with their bodies, which the graves or seas will give up. They will stand before Christ, Who will judge them according to their works, recorded in the books, and find them guilty. Another book—the Book of Life—will also be opened, to show the unbelievers that they are not among those whose sin has been cleansed by repentance and faith in Christ’s sacrifice, and who have eternal life, and they will be sentenced to the Lake of Fire to suffer conscious and eternal banishment from God.

ETERNITY (Revelation 21:1-8)

The final picture of the future is the eternal state. The earth, as we know it, will have been destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10-12). Time, as we know it, will have ceased. All true believers will be enjoying endless happiness in heaven. All who have rejected the Saviour will be suffering in the blackness of darkness forever. The question that faces each one of us as we draw to the end of these Bible studies is this, “Where will I spend eternity?”

OTHER VIEWS

The Millennium and Christ’s Second Coming

In order to distinguish between the main schools of interpretation regarding the sequence of the events referred to in the lesson above, these have been classified as PRE-millennialism, POST-millennialism and A-Millennialism. We have already discussed the first of these, which is based on the belief that Scripture teaches

that the Church, (consisting of resurrected believers and believers alive at the time) will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air at His coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) **before** the Tribulation, and **before** His coming in power and glory to reign for a thousand years..

There are some who think that the Church will pass through the great Tribulation, and believe that Revelation 7:9-17 supports this idea.

POST –MILLENNIALISM is the belief that the second coming of Christ will **follow** the millennium, which, it is claimed, will be experienced during the present gospel age, and at the end of which Christ will appear. It is believed that the gospel will become more effective in the end, and will lead to a time of peace and righteousness and great spiritual blessing. This idea would appear to be contrary to the clear statements of the Lord (Matthew 24:9-13; Luke 18:8), and the predicted apostasy at the end, mentioned there and in II Timothy 3:1-13 and 4:1-4 , also in II Peter 2:1-4. This school of thought is not very strong today.

A-MILLENNIALISM is the belief that there will not be a **literal** reign of Christ upon the earth: that Satan was bound at the first appearing of Christ, two thousand years ago; that the present age, between Christ's first appearing and His second coming, is the fulfilment of the Millennium. Some maintain that the Millennium is being fulfilled now on earth, and others that it is being fulfilled by the believers in heaven; that the eternal state follows the second coming of Christ. This belief is not in agreement with the apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42), and was unacceptable in the first three centuries of the early Church.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What does the text tell us about Christ's return?
- 2 According to 'pre-millennial thought', after the Lord's coming for His church (rapture: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) a time of great tribulation (Matthew 24:21) will come upon the earth. When will this time end?
- 3 According to Matthew 24:30; Matthew 25:31; and Revelation 20:6, what will the millennium be like?
- 4 How do the passages in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 and 1 Timothy 4:1 relate to the days in which we now live?
- 5 How should a believer in Christ conduct himself in light of Christ's coming again?

What the Bible Teaches - TEST 12 - Future Events

(Use **EXAM FORM** on the website menu)

Indicate the letter of the correct answer.

- 1 Future events are always accurately predicted
 - (a) only in the Bible
 - (b) by astrologers
 - (c) by fortune tellers
 - (d) by all of the above
- 2 The next event to take place so far as God's prophetic programme is concerned is
 - (a) the Great Tribulation
 - (b) the Rapture of the Church
 - (c) the Millennium
 - (d) the judgement at the Great White Throne
- 3 At the time of the Rapture
 - (a) those who have died trusting the Lord Jesus will be raised from the dead
 - (b) the only believers to go to heaven will be those who are still alive on earth
 - (c) all those who are dead will be raised, some to go to heaven, the others to go to judgement
 - (d) every person who has ever belonged to a Church will be taken to heaven
- 4 When He comes to take them to be with Himself,
 - (a) all believers will be changed
 - (b) this will take place instantly for all of them
 - (c) they will be like Christ
 - (d) all the above
- 5 When he comes, the Anti-Christ will
 - (a) deny that there is a God
 - (b) protect the Jewish people from their enemies during the Great Tribulation
 - (c) demand that people worship him
 - (d) persecute all true Christians left behind on earth at the time of the Rapture
- 6 The Lord Jesus will return to earth in power and glory
 - (a) at the time of the Rapture
 - (b) towards the end of the Great Tribulation
 - (c) at the end of the millennium
 - (d) only after God has created a new heaven and new earth
- 7 During the Millennium
 - (a) sin will be entirely absent from the earth
 - (b) punishment of evil doers will be postponed to the final Day of Judgement
 - (c) there will be great changes in nature
 - (d) the Lord Jesus will be in heaven
- 8 The Great White Throne Judgement will
 - (a) take place prior to the Millennium
 - (b) be for the purpose of judging the sins of believers
 - (c) result in the forgiveness of those sinners who confess their sin and ask for a second chance to be saved
 - (d) be a terrible and hopeless experience for sinners
- 9 The earth as we know it, is to
 - (a) be destroyed by water
 - (b) continue forever
 - (c) be burned up
 - (d) made unfit for human habitation by man's waste and pollution of its natural resources
- 10 The answer to the question, "Where will I be in eternity?"
 - (a) is not very important
 - (b) cannot be given for sure in this life
 - (c) should not be given now but should be put off to a more suitable occasion
 - (d) will depend entirely on what I do with the Lord Jesus Christ

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What does the Return of Christ mean to you?