

CHAPTER 1

ARE YOU SAVED ?

How many Christian books do you know begin by asking the reader if he is saved? Traditionally, it is in the final few pages of an evangelical Christian book where an invitation is given to the reader to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior so that he can be saved and go to heaven. So why is this book different?

This book seeks to Biblically answer the question, *'Who is the Bride of Christ?'* The Bride of Christ consists of those people who are born again, Bible-believing Christians who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Therefore, this book is written to all members of the Body of Christ who are saved and will be in heaven. Because the information contained in this book is written to Christians who are saved, this book begins by asking the reader if he is saved.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE 'BORN AGAIN' ?

If you are reading this book and you are not saved, let me briefly describe the steps whereby you can be sure that you are saved and will spend eternity with Jesus in heaven. However, before I outline the Biblical steps to salvation, I would like to define what it means to be '*born again*.' Not all Christians understand what the term '*born again*' means. So, let me explain what it means to be '*born again*' and why it is necessary for salvation.

Simply speaking, being born again means that you have repented of your sins and have asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart and be the Lord and Savior of your life. In *John 3:1-7*, Nicodemus came to Jesus and asked Him a question. Jesus answered Nicodemus by saying that he must be '*born again*.' In *John 3:1-7*, it is written:

'There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he

enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, You must be born again.'

In *John 3:3*, Jesus said:

'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'

In *John 3:7*, Jesus said:

'Marvel not that I said unto thee, You must be born again .'

In these passages, Jesus tells Nicodemus that unless he is born again, he cannot see (enter) the Kingdom of God (go to heaven). In *John 3:4*, we can tell that Nicodemus was thinking about being physically born through a mother's womb as it is written:

'Nicodemus saith unto him (Jesus), How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?'

Jesus answered Nicodemus by saying that He was not talking about being born physically through his mother's womb a second time - which is impossible but was rather talking about being **born spiritually**. This can be seen when we examine the reply of Jesus in *John 3:5-6* as it is written:

'Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh [physical birth through a mother's womb]; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' [being born spiritually by repenting of your sins and asking Jesus to come into your heart and be your Lord and Savior].

Being *'born again'* means that You are *'born anew or born from above.'* The Hebrew term for being *'born anew'* is expressed through the ceremony of going through a *'Mikvah.'* A *'Mikvah'* is an immersion bath. From a Jewish context, once somebody has gone through a *'Mikvah'* or immersion bath, he goes through a *'change of status.'* A person who has a *'Mikvah'* is not seen as having the same status after the *'Mikvah'* (immersion bath) is completed as when he started the *'Mikvah'* ceremony. Once the *Mikvah* is completed, he has gone through a *'change of status.'*

Spiritually speaking, this is what it means to be *'born again'* or born anew or born from above. Spiritually, whenever an unbeliever decides to repent of his sins

and ask God to forgive him of his sins by asking Jesus Christ into his heart and life and making Him his Lord and Savior, he becomes '*born again*' or born anew or born from above. Spiritually, when this is done, he experiences a '*change of status*.' He goes from being an unbeliever and a sinner who was on the road to hell and destruction to being a Christian whom God has promised will be in heaven with Jesus for all eternity.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO BE '*BORN AGAIN*' ?

Why is it necessary to be born again or accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior? When God created Adam in the Garden of Eden he had personal fellowship with God. Because God is a Spirit (*John 4:24*), in order for Adam to communicate with God, Adam could only communicate and have daily fellowship with God on a spirit-to-spirit basis (*1 Corinthians 2:10-12*).

However, God warned Adam that in the day that he sinned that he would die. (*Genesis 2:17*).

When Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he did not die physically because Adam lived to be 930 years old (*Genesis 5:5*). However, **when Adam sinned** by being disobedient to the commandments of God, **he died spiritually**. The Bible tells us in *Romans 5:12* that because of Adam's sin, spiritual death passed to all people who would be born after Adam as it is written:

'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'

Therefore, every human being who is born after Adam inherits Adam's sin nature and sin causes us to be spiritually dead.

In *Ezekiel 18:4* it is written:

'... the soul that sinneth, it shall die.'

In *Romans 6:23*, it is written:

'For the wages of sin is death '

Under these conditions, the Bible tells us in *Romans 3:10* as it is written:

'There is none righteous, no, not one.'

For these reasons, Jesus instructed Nicodemus that he must be *"born again."* In other words, Jesus taught us that something needed to be done about the sin problem in our lives. In Acts 17:30 it is written that God *has commanded all men everywhere to repent.*

The commission of John the Baptist was to preach repentance from sin. In *Mark 1:4*, it is written:

'John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.'

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 9:22 that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission for sin. When Jesus took the cup at his last supper he spoke these words in Matthew 26:28:

'For this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'

Therefore, from these things, we can see why we all need to be *'born again.'*

When Adam sinned, he died spiritually. Spiritual death is separation from the presence and life of God. We are separated from God because of our sins as it is written in *Isaiah 59:2*:

'But your iniquities have separated between you and your God: and your sins have hid his face from you, that he shall not hear.'

In Romans 3:23 it is written:

'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'

Because all mankind has inherited the sin nature of Adam and the spiritual death that was imparted unto him because of his sin of eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, all mankind are sinners and need to repent of their sins. Jesus came to this earth and shed His blood on the cross for the remission of sins for those people who would repent of their sins before God.

Upon repenting of our sins and asking Jesus Christ into our heart to be our Lord and Savior, we will be saved. In *Romans 10:9-12* it is written:

'That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession'

is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, 'Whosoever believeth on him (Jesus) shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek- for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.'

HOW ARE SINNERS SAVED?

The Bible tells us how we are saved. We are saved by God's grace (his unmerited favor toward us) through faith and not by our own good works. In *Ephesians 2:8-9* it is written:

'For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves.- it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.'

WHAT IS SIN?

In *1 John 3:4*, it is written:

'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.'

In *Romans 3:20*, the Bible tells us that we are not saved by obeying the law or by our own works as it is written:

'Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.'

In *Romans 3:28* it is written:

'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.'

So, the Bible tells us that we are Justified (saved) by grace through the redemptive work of Jesus when He shed His blood on the cross for our sins. In *Romans 3:24-26*, it is written:

'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'

In Galations 2.16, it is written:

'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be saved.'

In Romans 5:8-9, it is written:

'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him.'

In short, why do we need to be saved?

- 1. When God created man in the Garden of Eden he had perfect communication and fellowship with God. Because God is Spirit, they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Before Adam sinned, he was able to communicate and have communion and fellowship with God on God's spiritual level because God created Adam as a spirit being.**
- 2. When Adam sinned by disobeying God and eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam spiritually died and passed spiritual death to all mankind.**
- 3. Sin is transgressing the law of God and disobeying His Word. Sin separates man from God and sin causes both physical and spiritual death.**
- 4. In order to be reconciled back to God, man needs to confess his sins before God and accept God's plan of salvation for man. God's plan of salvation for man was accomplished through the death of Jesus on the cross and the shedding of His blood for the remission of our sins.**
- 5. By repenting of your sins and asking Jesus to come into your heart and life so that He can be your Lord and Savior, you are saved by God's grace through faith. You are not saved by your good deeds or being a good person.
(Ephesians 2:8-9)**

6. Before we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, our spirit is spiritually dead (separated from God). When we repent of our sins by asking Jesus to come into our heart and lives and be our Lord and Savior, our spirit man becomes '*born again*' and undergoes a spiritual '*Mikvah*' which is a '*change of status*.' When this happens, we change from being a sinner to being a saved Christian who will go to heaven and spend eternity with God.

ARE YOU SAVED AND GOING TO HEAVEN?

Are you saved? If you have not repented of your sins and asked Jesus to come into your heart and life, I urge you to do so today. If you have already done this, then the rest of this book is written to you as we will answer the question, '*Who is the Bride of Christ?*'

Because most people who are reading this book have already repented of their sins and have asked Jesus Christ to come into their hearts and lives, they are saved and will be in heaven.

However, by being saved, will you be the Bride of Christ?

WHO IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST?

I have been attending church regularly since I was five years old. Currently, I am a pastor of an independent non-denominational church. In addition, I am the President and Founder of Hebraic Heritage Ministries International which is a ministry devoted to teaching the Hebraic roots of Christianity to Christians all over the world. From being associated with Christianity and by being saved since I was a child, I was always taught that everyone who is saved is the Bride of Christ. However, is this what the Bible teaches?

Are all saved Christians the Bride of Christ? In the following chapters, I will outline and detail the characteristics described in the Bible concerning who is the Bride of Christ. The conclusion might be shocking to many Christians. Nonetheless, the answer of who is the Bride of Christ and what will be her commissioning in the age to come will be scripturally discussed, outlined, and presented in a step-by-step manner in the upcoming chapters.

As we describe the Bride of Christ and are able to outline and define her characteristics in the following chapters, we will not only be able to understand who the Bride of Christ is but we will also be able to know her when she is unveiled to this present evil world. God is beginning the process of unveiling the Bride of Christ in these final years before the soon return of the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and she will be revealed to the world in glory and majesty.

Let us continue our study together so that we may examine for ourselves in a step-by-step, theme-by-theme, characteristic-by-characteristic, scripture-by-scripture manner so that we can answer together the question, '*Who is the Bride of Christ?*' using the Bible as our basis for all authority on this subject.