

He Gave Them a Right to Become Children of God.

How this chart is designed.

Column One. Please note the first scripture, Acts 26:18, found in the header of the first column is also found in the header in the fifth column. The header is the first row above the dark line inside the chart. The movement in the chart is from left to right.

Read the scripture in column one in the body of the chart and then read directly across in each of the five columns. If the word in this particular scripture in the first column is found in the header columns, the word will be noted in its respective column in the body of the chart.

For instance, in Acts 2:38, we find the words repent and baptized. Since they are processes of the new birth and they happen in a sequential order they have been placed in their respective column from left to right. The fifth column is the result of what happened in the first four columns.

The words, believe, repent and baptized are used in context with the historical setting in which Luke used each word. For instance, the context of Acts 8:36 suggests the Ethiopian eunuch had already been through the processes of believing and repenting. It happened because he had believed the teachings of Philip about the kingdom of God. If this is the true context, then we understand he was obeying his faith with a repentant heart when he said, "Look here is water, why shouldn't I be baptized?" Acts 8:37. Philip assisted him in the last process of his new birth. They both went down into the water and Philip baptized the eunuch.

Sinners are defined as people who have broken the law of life (I John 3:4). The need to be born again happens for these maturing adolescent people when they have matured to the point where their consciences have begun to exercise and hold "mind court" on themselves (Rom. 2:14, 15). Their internal court sessions will make use of their lists of what is good and what is evil from their own memories. See Gen. 3:22; I Cor. 11:31; II Cor. 13:5.

When the maturity of their consciences approach - and finally become a reality in their mental faculties, a guilty conscience is the result. A guilty conscience can only be purified by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 9:9, 14). It is at this point of maturity every person needs to start and finish the processes of the new birth shown in this chart. The term "born again" literally means "begotten anew, or from above."

The movement in Acts 26:18 in the header is from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. The processes of the new birth show in each column how the graces of God through Christ cooperate with the mind, heart and behavior of a sinner in this dynamic movement after she or he hears the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel involves both the purpose of God in the creation of mankind and the grace of the cross. Grace is necessary because we are "in Adam."

Sinners may hear this gospel and believe what they understand in their minds. Some may decide to have faith this good news will provide satisfaction for their innate needs God created in them. They may decide to become obedient to their individual faith (Rom. 1:5). This will lead to their repentance of being a covenant breaker, like Adam. They decide to accept God's new covenant in the blood of Jesus (Heb. 8:10-12).

The foregoing processes happen in the mind and heart of a believer. Their individual faith is now a powerful force in their hearts and minds (Heb. 11:1). Their mind is now in charge of their will to act (I Cor. 7:37). They are ready to complete the new birth process by being baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 22:16).

This chart was not designed for a member of the church. It has been designed for a member of the church to share with his or her neighbor, friend or relative who may not have been born again. It can be used as a tool for the evangelism of other people. See I Peter 3:13-16. If you are not a Christian you may want to use this chart, along with your Bible, to teach yourself.

Questions for Discussion

A. The message preached to the people in Satan's dark domain. This chart presents only terminology. The theology, ethic and practices will need to be learned in deeper studies. The following questions must be answered by what you now know. We continue to learn about these doctrines for the reminder of our Christian lives. We are disciples of Christ.

1. Jesus preached the kingdom of God and Paul went every where preaching the same kingdom.

What does a person in the world realm need to know about the kingdom to be born again?

2. What is the "full measure of this life" in the kingdom of God?
3. What did the heathen Gentiles need to know about God?
4. What should be taught about the crucifixion of Christ in relation to sin?

B. Belief becomes faith leading to repentance and Baptism. The learning processes move from cognitive (mind) to affective (heart). This means we must understand the content of the message in our minds and then decide to believe it. We will not have faith in what we understand unless we see how it will satisfy one or more of our innate needs. Once we develop faith our behavior learning can begin. We act upon what we have internalized in our minds and hearts.

1. When the Jews on Pentecost asked "what shall we do?" What did it indicate about what was preached?
2. In answer to their question, what were they told to do?
3. How did their repentance relate to what they had asked?
4. What was the reason given by Peter for baptism? See Paul's explanation for what happens in the waters of baptism for faithful repentant sinners in Romans 6:3-11. Paul had been obedient to what he preached (Acts 22:16).
5. Where did Peter get his answers for their question on the Day of Pentecost?
6. When Philip preached the kingdom in Samaria some people believed and were baptized. What happened between their believing condition and their behavioral stage?
7. The jailer was told to believe in the Lord and he would be saved. Why was he baptized?

C. The people who had passed through the processes of the new birth had turned from darkness to light. **They had turned from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom that had been preached to them.**

All three stages of human learning were involved in their new birth (John 3:3-8).

1. Luke did not give the details about what happened in all three learning stages in each and every individual narrative where people

became Christians in Acts. Did this mean the preachers taught different ways of being born again? Can a stage of learning be bypassed and attain the goal for the learning exercise?

2. Is baptism a goal for a sinner?
3. Is it possible for a baby to go through the processes of the new birth?
4. When can "times of refreshing" come from the Lord?
5. Can a person who has not been baptized for the remission of their sins expect the Holy Spirit to have fellowship with them?
6. When were the jailer and his family filled with joy?