

Are You Truly Born Again? **Do you really know what it means to be born again?**

Understanding what it means to be born again is by far the most important issue facing a believer because Jesus said, in John 3:3, *"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again"*. Jesus' plain words tell us that if we are not born again then we will not make it into the kingdom of God and this of course means that we will end up in hell because that is the only other possibility. There is no second chance beyond the grave nor is there a purgatory. We need to know exactly what it means to be born again because we may be living under an illusion that we are saved and eventually face God's fiery judgment rather than receive a rich welcome into His presence. Hell is going to be the destiny of many who think they are born again but are not. Jesus said in Matt. 7:21, *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven"*. In 2 Cor. 13:5, God solemnly warns us, *"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves"*, so let's take a close look at what it means to be born again and honestly put ourselves to the test.

Firstly, born again means to become a child of God by being born spiritually. When we repent and believe in Jesus He sends His Spirit into our life and in that way we are born spiritually and become children of God. When we are born again we become a new person. 2 Cor. 5:17 says that *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* This change from old to new occurs through the power of God's Spirit working within us. Phil. 2:13 says, *"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose"*, and that purpose is to sanctify our sinful souls.

Now I'd like to look at some verses which describe the new life of a saved person so that we can see the change which occurs when someone is born again. The following show that a person cannot continue in a sinful lifestyle and be born of God at the same time:

1 John 5:18 & Tit. 2:11-12 say, *"We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin ... For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age"*.

Then Eph. 4:22-24 & 1 John 5:4 tell us, *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self ... to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness ... for everyone born of God overcomes the world [that is, they overcome sin]"*.

From these verses we can see that when someone is born again, they don't continue in sin but *"put on the new self"* and live *"self-controlled, upright and godly lives"*. This doesn't mean that they're sinlessly perfect but it certainly does mean that they don't continue to deliberately and knowingly sin.

Now I'd like to give some practical examples which show how tragically misled many churchgoers are. I spoke to a woman once who said that she lived with her partner. I told her that fornication was a sin and that she needed to repent of it. In reply, she told me that her partner's father was a Pastor and he said it was OK because they loved each other. Another time I was talking to a church elder who told me that a woman he knew well had left her husband to live with another man. He asked her if she still had that 'feeling for Jesus' in her heart. When she said yes, he said that she was still saved. These poor souls have been lulled into a false hope and are being shepherded to judgment as Eph. 5:3-6 so clearly show. Speaking to Christians, these verses say, *"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people [Christians] ... For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or*

greedy person ... has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient". These verses make it very, very clear that professing Christians in an immoral relationship are not born again and must repent or else they will face God's wrath.

Another very dark and common problem in the church is bad relationships between members. In one case I know of, one couple had a dispute with another couple and ended up leaving the church. Efforts were made to get them reconciled but, as far as I know, they are still enemies. These souls are professing Christians but they refuse to be reconciled and are under the illusion that they are born again despite 1 John 4:20 and 3:15 saying, "*If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother [a fellow Christian], he is a liar and anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him*". The Bible makes it obvious that hatred between believers will send many churchgoers to hell unless they repent. Gal. 5:19-21 tell us, "*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious ... hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy ... I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God*". As these verses say, those who are living according to their sinful nature will not see the kingdom of God. We must be born again and put off our old, sinful ways if we want to live eternally in God's presence.

From these examples we can see that there are churchgoers who think they are born again but they are not. Instead, they are in deep sin. It is because of the lack of sound teaching and church discipline that many people are being horribly misled and simply don't know what it means to be born again. Besides immorality and hate, some other common sins within the church are pornography, lying, drunkenness and lust. Also, using copyrighted movies and music without paying for them is simply stealing which, like all sin, separates us from God.

So, the question I have for you is this, "How do you stand with the Lord? Are you born again?" If you're deliberately continuing in sin then you're definitely not saved and need to repent as you're in danger of the fire of hell. Please don't listen to any smooth talking Shepherd who tells you that this sin or that sin is OK but, rather, read your Bible and listen to the Good Shepherd Jesus. Sin always ... always ... separates us from God but the Good News is that repentance always brings forgiveness so I urge you, if you are in sin, get on your knees right now and repent while you still have time. Call upon Jesus to forgive you and ask Him to be your Lord and Master for the rest of your life to help you to live a life that pleases Him. If your heart is right, you will be forgiven and the Spirit will immediately begin to work within you to cleanse you of sin and to strengthen you to walk in holiness. If your heart is not right, that is, if you are not serious about repenting, then nothing will change and you'll remain on the Broad Road to destruction. Unless you are willing to be born again and walk in holiness, you will surely die in your sins and face a fiery judgment.

Finally, I have four videos called Salvation Parts 1 to 4 which discuss what salvation is and how the Spirit works within us to purify our souls. Part 4 is on the Once Saved doctrine. I also have a video called Law And Grace which shows that being saved by Grace means to be under the control of the Holy Spirit and rescued from our sinful nature. Also, *The Calvary Road*, by Roy Hession, is a free little book which shows how to have a close walk with Jesus. The links to this book and the videos are at the end of this video.

If you're not familiar with how the Holy Spirit works in a believer's life then I urge you to learn how to recognise and respond to the witness of the Spirit so that you can live a holy life as Heb. 12:14 warns us, "*without holiness no one will see the Lord*". Very few churches teach about the Spirit's work regarding sin and repentance and, for this reason, sin is common and many churches are little more than social clubs. So, search the Scriptures to understand how the Spirit cleanses us and empowers us to become new creations, born again and no longer slaves to sin.

May the Lord bless you with a sure knowledge of His presence as you walk with Him. Amen.

The Calvary Road can be downloaded from <http://www.christianissues.biz/revival.html>
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