

Why Must We Be Born Again?

TEXT: John 3:7: Marvel not that I said unto thee [Nicodemus], “Ye must be born again”.

This truth of being born again has a divine origin. It was designed in Heaven. It bears God’s copyright. God wants us in His family, and there is no other way in but by this spiritual birth. Our whole human race was born separated from, and away from God. All our desires and actions are against the Lord. Even the best church member and the most moral person here need to be born again. If you only knew how refined and respectable Nicodemus was, you would more likely see your own need of the new birth.

There is nothing else in the world that can take the place of the new birth. Neither confirmation nor water baptism will take its place. Simon, as recorded in the **8th chapter of Acts**, was baptized, and by a God-sent preacher, using the right baptismal way and in the right way; but when Peter and John came down and saw his heart, Peter said, “**Thou hast neither lot nor part in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Thou art still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity; —** a baptized, but lost sinner”.

When we ask people if they are saved or if they will come to Christ to be saved, they say, “Oh, I have been baptized”, or “I have joined the church and have been confirmed”. Have you been born again? “What is that?” they say. No one can be saved unless he is born again by the power of God’s Spirit. In **John 3:7** Jesus says: “**Ye must be born again**”. The necessity is absolute; it is not merely - you may be born again, or you can be born again, but, “**YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN**”, said Jesus.

A great many people are depending upon the fact that they say prayers, read their Bibles, go to church, take part in the sacraments, and perform charitable duties. No performing of religious duties will take the place of the new birth.

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A great many people tell me they believe the Apostles’ Creed. ‘I am a fundamentalist, [or orthodox], and hold the right views about Christ and the Bible.’ You can be orthodox and be lost forever. I suppose the devil is as orthodox as they come. The devil knows the truth about the Bible and he hates it. He loves to get others to believe a lie, for he is the author of all false religions. The devil knows the truth about Christ and believes in

His deity, but he tries to keep others from believing it. He knows Jesus Christ is Divine, the Son of the Living God. The devil knows the truth about Hell, and no one knows better than the devil that it is an everlasting Hell. The devil is fundamental, but he is lost. You must be born again.

Culture and refinement, with all outward correctness of life and conduct, will not take the place of the new birth. The trouble is in our hearts. The corruptness within us which the Bible tells about is the whole reason for the necessity of the new birth. God told Jeremiah to write: ***“The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and who can know it”?*** Jesus said in **Mark 7:21-22**, out of the heart proceeds:

**The trouble
is in our
hearts.**

- evil thoughts
- adulteries
- fornications
- murders
- thefts
- covetousness
- wickedness
- deceit
- lasciviousness
- an evil eye
- blasphemy
- pride
- foolishness

Then Jesus said in **Mark 7:23**: ***“All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”*** None of us, with all the outward reforms we can make, can change the deeper depths of our inner life, the heart.

Mark 7:21-23

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Suppose I had a rotten apple. I could take that apple and then paint it until it was just as beautiful in appearance as any delicious apple you have ever seen. However, it would be just as rotten as ever inside. Take one bite into it and you would not need anyone to persuade you otherwise. **The trouble with all of us is, outside of Jesus Christ and His saving power, we are rotten at heart. We need to be born again. In fact, we *must* be born again, or we will be lost forever.** All the refinement, respectability, and reforms are but wax coatings on the outside with a little touch-up paint. It is like white-washing an old fence. We need to be washed white in the blood of the Lamb of God.

There is no other cure for our inward corruption but the new birth. That is why Jesus said what He did to Nicodemus. Have you ever considered who Nicodemus was? He was of the strictest sect of Jews, a Pharisee, a religious leader and pastor of the First Church. He was as moral and upright as religion could make him, or that he could make himself. Yet Jesus said to him: ***Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. John 3:7***

Nicodemus was shocked, bewildered, puzzled, and amazed that Jesus would talk to him that way. Jesus said, ***“Marvel not”***. Don't be surprised, Nicodemus, for except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. These words are not general; they are right down to the single person, each individual.

Jesus is here telling us that the necessity of the new birth is worldwide. There is not a man or woman on the face of the earth that can make it into Heaven without being born again, or saved. The two terms mean one and the same thing. There is no exception.

If anyone could have entered the Kingdom of God without the new birth, it surely was Nicodemus. He was honorable and respectable to everyone; he lived in the best religious society, a man of culture, of orthodox faith, and deeply religious. He prayed, studied his Bible, fasted, and gave alms to the poor. But the Lord Jesus looked him straight in the eye and said: “Nicodemus, you must be born again”. No exceptions, for except a man be born again he shall not enter the Kingdom of God. So, I am coming to you in all honesty, and cannot change the message, dilute the words of Jesus, or tone them down.

Have you been born again? I do not ask if you are a church member, if you belong to the Baptist, Catholic or Methodist church. I do not ask if you believe the truth about the Bible, Jesus, or if you go to church and pray. I only ask: Have you been saved and born again?

I have been asked by many, in over 30 years of serving the Lord: “What does it mean to be born again?” As good a definition or answer I know of is found in:

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The new birth is a new creation — a complete change in our life that only the Spirit of God can perform. Our affections, desires, thoughts, ambitions and our perverted will are corrupt by the sinful nature we all possess. We are born with a mind that is blinded to the truth of our sinfulness. Only the Spirit of God can change our nature, or transform us into new creatures. Our tastes, desires, and longings to please ourselves and our selfishness are changed. By nature, we love ourselves and enjoy pleasing ourselves. We delight in being seen, for we are proud, and ***Proverbs 16:18*** says:

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Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

We may not all lie, swear, get drunk, murder, steal, or do anything vicious or vulgar. Our minds are bent on pleasing ourselves, but when Jesus saves us, He changes our will and our purposes of life. Instead of pleasing self, it is in pleasing the Lord we find our highest enjoyment. Our will is now surrendered to God, and Jesus is now Lord of our Life. We live to please Him.

Paul writes in ***2 Corinthians 5:15*** this definition of the new birth:

And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him Who died for them, and rose again.

Before we were saved we did many things to please ourselves; after being born again we do them to please the Lord. Before, we loved the things we ought not to love; for example, novels or TV programs more than the Bible. A great many of us here today, if we were to stand and tell the truth, would rather go to the movies, or watch one on TV, than to go to church. We love the entertainment of the world, the very thing God hates.

God hates gambling and suggestive dancing, and I would surely think any intelligent, modest person would also, if they would only stop and think a little. We think more of these things than going to a prayer meeting to pray for a great outpouring of the Spirit of God. When the Lord imparts that new nature into your heart, you will love the Bible, the Church, and prayer meetings more than the things of the world.

You will love to be in the company of God's people rather than the worldly group. The wonderful thing about the salvation of the Lord is that He changes us and continues to change us into His image. Our new tastes and affections replace the old tastes and affections. There is not any reason though, to think you have to be a negative Christian. There is something far better to take the place of the old things. Paul tells about the old things that have passed away. Have your old desires and affections and places of enjoyment passed away? Today, do you know all things are become new? What is new in your life now that was not there before you professed to be saved? I can tell by your answer if you are really a born-again Christian.

Today, I have more joy in reading this precious Book and pouring over its wonderful pages than I used to when reading Zane Grey.

When you are born again, you will get a brand new mind that understands and enjoys this Heavenly Book. You will no longer believe all the nonsense that the devil's agents tell us, i.e., that there are "errors" and mistakes in the Bible, all under the name of phony scholarship.



Before we are saved, we cannot believe in the teaching in the Bible of the Atonement, that Jesus took our sins in His own body on the cross. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to the unbeliever, the unsaved. When you are born again, the truth that Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the cross will be one of the sweetest and most precious doctrines in the world. It brought us to Jesus and to His wonderful salvation from our sins and our old life of wickedness and shame.

Do you know the difference between a hog's nature and a sheep's nature? A hog will fall down in the mud, and wallow in it, and stay there. A sheep may fall into the mud, but he gets up as quickly as he can, and gets out of there. If a person is born again, and the devil trips him up, and he falls in temptation, he will not stay down but will get up and out of sin as quickly as he can. He will grieve and ache in heart if doing the least thing unchristian-like, and will long for the cleansing and restoration. When we are born again, our nature is changed from a hog's nature to a sheep's nature.

If we are only outwardly righteous, or only converted on the surface of our lives, we will still love to sin and will secretly sneak around and do what the world calls those “little no-harm sins”. We will still hanker after the world and its pleasures. We are only a washed sow.

2 Peter 2:20

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For it had been better off for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it and turned away from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb:

2 Peter 2:22:

The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.



Another animal the Holy Spirit uses in the Bible to describe a sinner is the goat. He is proud and resents being told what to do. The proud sinner resents being told he must be born again. He rebels against being told what he must do. He wants to be a law unto himself, unrestricted, to have his own way. The Bible says in:

Isaiah 53:6: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus said to Nicodemus [a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews] in **John 3:3** and **3:7**:

John 3:3: 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”.

John 3:7: Marvel not that I said unto thee, “Ye must be born again”.

Notice the finality of these words; the NEW Birth is a MUST.

Jesus said in **Matthew 6:24**:

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

The meaning of the latter sentence being: You cannot serve the Lord and the devil.

Jesus said in ***Matthew 7:18-20:***

18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

John 14:17:

Even the Spirit of Truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Jesus' words were like a thunderbolt to Nicodemus. There are some things in life that are a MUST. They are not optional which we may or may not do. There were some things that were a "must" for Jesus to do, and others that we must do:

There are
some things
in life that
are a MUST.

1. The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day, rise again.

Luke 24:7: Saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up — ***that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:15:***

2. John 20:9: For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Hebrews 9:16: For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

3. God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

John 4:24: God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

4. This Gospel must first be published among all nations.

Mark 13:10: And the Gospel must first be published among all nations.

5. The scriptures must be fulfilled.

Luke 24:44: And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.

Acts 1:16: Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

Revelation 1:1: The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.

Revelation 4:1: After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in Heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Revelation 22:6: And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy Prophets sent his angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done.

6. The scriptures must not be broken.

John 10:35: If he called them gods, unto whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken.

Acts 14:22: Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.

2 Corinthians 5:10: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Hebrews 11:6: But without Faith it is impossible to please Him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 13:17: Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

7. Jesus said you must be born of water and of the Spirit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

John 3:5: 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.

These are fighting words to the rebellious and proud of heart, but they are most welcome words to those who want to be saved from their sins and receive eternal life. The Holy Spirit must prepare our hearts to see our need of receiving Christ as our only Savior. If you resist the convicting power of the Spirit, your pride and the devil had a part in doing it.

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The devil has four ways to keep you out of Heaven:

- 1. Helping you resist the truth and the Spirit's conviction**
- 2. Hardening your heart against the Word of God**
- 3. Turning you away from the Gospel and the Way of Salvation by false doctrine**
- 4. Blinding your mind to the Way of Salvation**

To offset satan's efforts to destroy our souls and lead us blindly down the downward road to our eternal doom, God has sent His Holy Spirit into the world to convict us of our sins and to draw us to Jesus, the only Savior from sin. If you feel a longing to be free from your sins, and if you want God's peace in your heart, the Holy Spirit is saying

to you today in this Word of God: “Today if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Today is the day of your salvation!”

Now, I feel so many of you have said in your hearts: ‘No, I know I am not born again, but I want to be.’ Can I have the happy privilege of telling you how? I will tell you what God tells us in His Word.

Jesus said in **Mark 1:15** to “repent and believe the Gospel”.

Mark 1:15: And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel.

The Gospel is: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; He was buried and He arose again the third day for our justification. That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but shall have everlasting life. John 3:16b

The moment you surrender to Jesus, He will take you into His loving care and transform you into what He created you to be.

I care not how hardened a sinner you have been, or how unbelieving you are. Anyone who will throw open his heart to let Jesus come in to rule and reign will find that He is the sin-bearing Savior and the deliverer from the power of sin and satan. The moment you surrender to Jesus, He will take you into His loving care and transform you into what He created you to be.

But as many as received Him, to them gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name. John 1:12

We are born again by God’s Holy Spirit, thru His Word, the moment we receive the Lord Jesus Christ into our hearts to be our only Savior from sin. When you take Christ into your heart and Jesus comes in to reign and transform, you are changed into a new creature in Christ. You are born again and have entered the Kingdom of Heaven!

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