

Born Again What does it Mean?

Perhaps you have heard the expressions, "I am saved" or "born again" or something similar, and you have wondered what it means. Was it just a trite religious saying that people use, or is there more to it? Well, if you will permit me, I would like to briefly explain what being "born again" and being "saved" means.

First of all, to be "born again" does NOT mean anything physical. Why? In John, Chapter 3, Jesus was talking to Nicodemus where we read, "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." To this Nicodemus replied, ". . . , How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" {John 3:3-4} It was not possible to go back and have a physical rebirth, of course, we all know that! No, what Jesus was talking about was something entirely different. What, you may ask, was that!?

Jesus was talking about a spiritual birth, of being "born again" from above, as in Heaven. You see, man was once alive spiritually, but because he disobeyed God and sinned, he died spiritually. God created everything in this world, including man. *At the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* (Genesis 1:1; 27) To the man God said, *"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (Genesis 2:15-17) But man, Adam, disobeyed God and yielded to the temptation of the devil; the devil, Satan, appeared as a serpent and tempted Adam and his wife, Eve. *"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."* (Genesis 3:6) At that very moment they died spiritually, and eventually they died physically. From that moment on, every person born into this world, with the exception of Jesus Christ, is born a sinner; from the moment of conception every person (yes, the unborn also) have a sin nature that was inherited from Adam, and it is from this sin nature that ALL acts of sin are committed. *"Whereas by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"* (Romans 5:12)

The penalty for being a sinner is death; a physical death that all experience, but also a spiritual death in the place the Bible calls hell/the lake of fire, UNLESS they are "born again" (saved). *"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* (Revelation 11-15) God is a God of love, and not hatred, as so many have believed, and from the very moment when Adam sinned, God had already provided a way of redemption, or spiritual renewal, if you will, and that way is through the person of Jesus Christ, by His death and shed blood on the Cross of Calvary. You see, even though we are sinners living a life of sin, Jesus Christ, God's only Son, came into this world so that He could pay our sin debt and we would not have to spend eternity in a devil's hell. *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8) *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16) God did this for us because of His great love for us.

To be "born again" means, in simple terms, to be made alive; more specifically, to be made alive in Jesus Christ. Other words such as "regenerated" or "quicken" mean the same thing. When a person recognizes that they are the sinner for whom Jesus Christ died, if they will repent (a change of mind that leads to a change of heart; to take God's side against our sin) and by faith alone in His shed blood, receive Him as personal Saviour, then and only then are they forgiven and saved - saved, born again! *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"* (Ephesians 2:4-5) Of ourselves, there is absolutely nothing we can do to

earn our salvation, to be born again; it is ALL of faith; no works whatsoever! *"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."* (Ephesians 2:8-9) Any person, no matter who they are or what they may have done, can be born again for God's Word says, *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* (Romans 10:13)

What does it mean to be "born again?" It means to be made spiritually alive as one who has had his sins forgiven by God; it means to be made alive in Jesus Christ. *"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Romans 6:9-11) *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (Galatians 2:20) If you have never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, then where you are, RIGHT NOW, you can if you will repent of your sin and by faith alone in His shed blood, ask Him to forgive you and bring you into your heart and save you. There is no magical formula or special prayer; it is a matter of faith alone. How can you know for sure if you have been forgiven and born again? Consider God's Word that says, *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."* (1 John 5:11-13) This same Jesus who died on the Cross of Calvary bodily rose from the grave and today, at this very moment, is in Heaven at the right hand of God the Father. *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;"* (Hebrews 10:10-12) For those who have been "saved," "born again," when we leave this earthly life, we will be with our Saviour in His Heaven. *"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."* (2 Corinthians 5:8) This is what God's Word, the Bible, says; God said it, it settles it; will you now believe it?

My friend, those of us who have been born again are not perfect, nor do we have the ability to say that we are; we are just sinners saved by the grace of a loving God. Our sins, past, present, and future, are all under the blood of Jesus Christ who loved us **and** gave Himself for us. When we receive Jesus Christ as Saviour, we then have the responsibility to live in such a manner as to bring honour and glory to the risen Saviour (I Co. 6:19-20). That's why it's important for Christians to regularly attend an independent, fundamental, Bible-believing and Bible-preaching church - that they may consistently sit under the ministry of God's Word and grow spiritually. Make new friends, Christian friends, spend time in prayer, and above all, read God's Word every day.

~Richard A. Ciarrocca