

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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“Born Again” - What Does It Mean and How Can I Be Born Again?

Introduction

There was a time when certain expressions were recognized as “Biblical”, however, times have changed and today the term “born again” is used by a variety of groups. It is not only used by the New Age Movement, but also a face cream to assist in making an individual look younger! Another has said that Jesus was the first to be ‘born again’, a statement which is blasphemous.

The Meeting

- 1) It was a strange meeting, seemingly none of the disciples were present, and there were no crowds. This was a man and the Lord alone, for the Lord deals with bringing people to himself as individuals. Thousands can be saved at a single gathering (Acts 4:4) but they are each personally convicted of sin, understand why they need salvation, the sufficiency of Christ to meet their need, and the satisfaction of God with the provision Christ has made at Calvary. Each of us is brought to Christ as an individual. I cannot get saved (born again) for any other individual. We were born individuals, we die as individuals, and get born into the family of God as individuals.
- 2) There is recorded for us part of the conversation at that meeting. I have adjusted the narrative so that it can be seen as a discussion: (Jn. 3:1-9) KJV
 - a) **Narrative:** “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,
 - b) **Nicodemus:** “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”
 - c) **Jesus:** “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
 - d) **Nicodemus:** “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”
 - e) **Jesus:** “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, Ye must be born again”
 - f) **Nicodemus:** “How can these things be?”
- 3) There must be a certain amount of sympathy for Nicodemus as this carpenter of Nazareth tells him, the religious ruler, that he needs to be born again. It was also quite a startling statement for Nicodemus since, not only was he in the religious hierarchy, but he was born a Jew. This was a term used of a Gentile proselyte when he or she was baptized

into the Jewish faith, they were born again! It meant the end of one relationship and the beginning of a new loyalty and commitment. But, even that level was in the background for the puzzle to Nicodemus was seen in his double use of the word “how” (Jn. 3:4, 9). This is a thinking man and so he asks:

- a) “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”
- b) “How can these things be?”

4) Nicodemus was to learn a truth that is very hard for sincere, honest people who endeavor to be good neighbors, obey the golden rule, and do their best, to understand and accept. It was very hard for Nicodemus to understand that all the religious ordinances and functioning's could not help him to be in a right relationship with God. The Lord said: “Ye must be born again”. There are thousands of people who today are sincere in their beliefs, are baptized, and wonderful persons who have been told, “do the best you can and you will be in Heaven”. The Lord says to them as He said to Nicodemus: “Ye must be born again”. There has to be a change brought about by God that produces an inward change, a spiritual transformation, and by that transformation one becomes a child of God, they are “born again”.



5) The truth that being made a child of God had been already alluded to by John when he wrote: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (Jn 1:12, 13); this was an important clarification for becoming a child of God.

- a) By saying it is not by blood, the message is clear, an individual is not a Christian because their parents were.
- b) By saying it is not by the will of the flesh, the message is not by human endeavor, therefore a person can be baptized, high ranking in a church, take communion, and none of that will enable them to become a child of God.
- c) Again, by saying not by the will of man, the message is, no matter how much one desires to be a child of God, desire will never make the individual such.
- d) They have to be born of God, but how can that be done?

How can I in 2014-2015 be born again, to enter this new life, this freedom from the fear of death and bondage to sin? What can I do?

- a) On one hand the individual can do nothing for it has been done two thousand years ago when Christ was on the cross. In the three hours of darkness God laid the foundation for the individual to enter a new life with a perfect righteousness before God. When Christ rose from the dead it was much more than a dead body coming back to life as Lazarus did, it was the demonstration of God’s power in breaking the stranglehold of Satan and death.
- b) On the other hand, if an individual does nothing with God’s offer of a new beginning they will die in their sins and never be in heaven.

This new birth is by grace, God offering the gift of salvation. “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.” (Eph. 2:8-9). When an individual is saved, he/she has been born again, spiritually renewed, and is now a child of God by right of new birth. Trusting in Jesus Christ, the One who paid the penalty of sin when He died on the cross, is the means to be “born again.” God pledges His word: “If any man (individual) be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:17, 18).

What did Nicodemus do? The narrative ends and we are not told. Was he born into God’s family that night on the Judean hillside, or was it later in his apartment in Jerusalem? Where he was born again is irrelevant. The question is, “Have I been born into God’s family?” If not, then if I die as I am I will never be in heaven. If I believe God, that Christ bore the penalty for my sins at Calvary, and I am willing to put my complete trust in His finished work on the cross, then I am born again. The question is, “Will I or will I not believe?” The decision is up to the individual, and in the words of Shakespeare: “To be or not to be, that is the question”. The question each of us must answer individually is: “Do I want to be born again, or not be born again?” Where we will spend eternity depends on our answer.

... Rowan Jennings

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