

Born Again

What Does it Mean?

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 3:3

Is it important to be born again? Yes, you cannot see the kingdom of God, (heaven) if you are not born again. So if it is so important what does it mean to be born again?

We are born again when we acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He came to this earth and died for us and we confess our sins and surrender all to him it is then said that we are born again. At this point Jesus covers our sinful life with his perfect life we are counted perfect in His sight, we are justified.

But is this where it ends? Jesus gave us a story of an individual who didn't go beyond this point. Jesus said in Luke 11:24-26 "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

So Justification is only part if it. The house needs more than just cleaning out. Something else needs to happen. It is called Sanctification. Not only must we be justified but we then need to be sanctified. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Justification means pardon. It means that the heart, purged from dead works, is prepared to receive the blessing of sanctification. God has told us what we must do to receive this blessing. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Signs of the Times 1902-12-17

"I have no smooth message to bear to those who have been for so long as false guide-posts, pointing the wrong way. If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ. Neglect this great salvation, kept before you for years, despise this glorious offer of justification through the blood of Christ, and sanctification through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. I entreat you now to humble yourselves, and cease your stubborn resistance of light and evidence. Say unto the Lord, "Mine iniquities have separated between me and my God. O Lord, pardon my transgressions. Blot out my sins from the book of thy remembrance." Praise his holy name, there is forgiveness with him, and you can be converted, transformed." Special Testimony to Battle Creek Church, 1896 Pamphlet 154 P.42

There are so many who have stopped at justification and gone no further, they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof: 2 Timothy 3:5 In other words, they profess to be Christians (have a form of godliness) but are not living like Christians (deny the power thereof).

So what is the power? What does it do? It is the power of "God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure". Philippians 2:13 It is God working in you to keep His law.

*"As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, **it becomes omnipotent.** Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings." Christ's Object Lessons, .333*

*What did that say? The will of man becomes omnipotent, all powerful! When we surrender all to Christ we become all powerful, unstoppable. But we must give him permission to come into our lives and fill us and control us with His Holy Spirit. He will then works in us and empower us to live His life. Can I live a Christian life on my own, in my own strength? No. If one has a strong will they may fool some into thinking that they are, but they will never fool everyone, and they can never fool God. This kind of living is called legalism. I can only live a Christian life if I allow Jesus to come into my life and fill me with his omnipotent power. Paul says "I can do **all things** through Christ which strengtheneth me." Allowing God to work his works in and threw me, this is true Christianity.*

A legalist is someone who is trying to keep Gods law in his own strength. A true Christian is someone who is keeping Gods law threw the indwelling omnipotent power of God. Who gets the credit for the Christian's good

works? *God. In our own strength we can do nothing that is acceptable to God, it is only through the indwelling of the omnipotent power of God in our life that we can ever hope to keep God's law as he demands it to be kept.*

“The gospel of good news was not to be interpreted as allowing men to live in continued rebellion against God by transgressing his just and holy law. Why cannot those who claim to understand the Scriptures, see that God's requirement under grace is just the same he made in Eden,--**perfect obedience to his law**. In the Judgment, God will ask those who profess to be Christians, Why did you claim to believe in my Son, and continue to transgress my law? Who required this at your hands--to trample upon my rules of righteousness? "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." The gospel of the New Testament is not the Old Testament standard lowered to meet the sinner and save him in his sins. **God requires of all his subjects obedience, entire obedience to all his commandments. He demands now as ever perfect righteousness as the only title to heaven.** Christ is our hope and our refuge. **His righteousness only is imputed to the obedient.** Let us accept it through faith, that the Father shall find in us no sin. But those who have trampled on the holy law will have no right to claim that righteousness. Oh that we might view the immensity of the plan of salvation as obedient children to all God's requirements, believing that we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, our atoning sacrifice!” Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 1886-09-21

“Often the question arises, Why, then, are there so many, claiming to believe God's word, in whom there is not seen a reformation in words, in spirit, and in character? Why are there so many who cannot bear opposition to their purposes and plans, who manifest an unholy temper, and whose words are harsh, overbearing, and passionate? There is seen in their lives the same love of self, the same selfish indulgence, the same temper and hasty speech, that is seen in the life of the worldling. There is the same sensitive pride, the same yielding to natural inclination, the same perversity of character, as if the truth were wholly unknown to them. **The reason is that they are not converted.** They have not hidden the leaven of truth in the heart. It has not had opportunity to do its work. Their natural and cultivated tendencies to evil have not been submitted to its transforming power. Their lives reveal the absence of the grace of Christ, an unbelief in His power to transform the character.” COL. 99

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. **The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.**” DA. 555

John tells us the same thing in 1 John 3:2-10 “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: **for sin is the transgression of the law.** And ye know that **he was manifested to take away our sins;** and in him is no sin. **Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not:** whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, **let no man deceive you:** he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. **He that committeth sin is of the devil;** for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. **Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him:** and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: **whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God,** neither he that loveth not his brother.”

So how can we know if we have been truly born again? By our actions, our works. Jesus says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” John 14:15

*Some may say, “But my works can never justify me. I am justified by faith.” Galatians 2:16 says: “Knowing that a man is not **justified by the works** of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might **be justified by the faith** of Christ, and not by the works of the law: **for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**”. *“We are **justified** by faith. All our past sins are forgiven and covered with Christ's righteousness. This is what it means to be justified. No matter how many good works I do they can never cover my sins. Only Jesus can do this. But it isn't enough to just have my past sins covered? There needs to be a change in our lives and this is called sanctification. Sanctification is accomplished by the doing of good works.**

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one

God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” James 2.17-26

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,” Hebrews 2.11

*Justification is my title to heaven but I also have to be fit in order to enter heaven. Sanctification is my fitness. We can't enter heaven with justification alone (our title) we also have to be sanctified, our fitness. Both of these are free gifts. God accomplishes them for us, but we must submit to Him and allow Him to work in us. The first covers our past sins, so we can appear perfect in God's sight. The second gives us power to keep from sinning. So we can remain perfect in God's sight. The first we ask Christ to do **for us**. The second we ask Christ to do **in us**. Both of them are done by and threw the power of God all we can do is to give God permission to do it. His work in us must be continually active in our lives. The moment we stop Him from working in our lives the work ceases and we sin. Satan will constantly tempt us to take our will out of God's will so we will fall into sin. In a sense the good works we perform threw the power of God is proof that we have been justified. Because even if we were once justified but are now sinning we are no longer justified because Christ only Justifies the sinner who confesses and forsakes his sins. If we are still sinning it is obvious that we haven't forsaken our sins. Remember, “The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin.”*

“The Bible contains instruction regarding the character God's children must possess. "Blessed are the pure in heart," it declares, "for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." I John 3:2, 3.” Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 429

“Study God's word prayerfully. That word presents before you, in the law of God and the life of Christ, the great principles of holiness, without which "no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14. It convinces of sin; it plainly reveals the way of salvation. Give heed to it as the voice of God speaking to your soul.” Steps to Christ, p.35

“The lesson book, the Bible, contains the instruction of the character they must have, the moral excellence of character which must be cultivated, which God and heaven require. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin.

This all-important knowledge is to be kept before children and youth, not in an arbitrary, dictatorial manner, but as divine disclosures, which are of the highest value to secure their present peace, quietude, and rest of mind in this present world of turmoil and strife, and as a preparation for the future, eternal life in the kingdom of God, where they shall see God, and know God and Jesus Christ, who gave his precious life to redeem them." Special Testimonies on Education p. 234

To be born again means, you are Justified and being Sanctified and sanctification goes on for the rest of your life. Both Sanctification and Justification ceases when one sins. One must then ask for forgiveness for the sin(s) and turn away from them in order to be justified again and for sanctification to continue. This is very important to understand. Ezekiel tells us in Ezekiel 18:20-28: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his

transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: **in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.** Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.”

It is very critical that when we slip and fall that we make things right as soon as possible. We can't afford to die in our sins. Our eternity depends on us being right with God moment by moment.

*Just because you are born again doesn't mean that you won't ever slip and fall into sin. Satan is going to do everything he can to cause you to take your eyes of Jesus and get you to fall. What it means is that you have committed your life completely to God, that you would rather die than do anything that would hurt Christ. There is a difference between being tripped up by circumstances and thereby fall into sin, and premeditated sin. Also as time goes on the born again Christian will find that he is tripped up less and less. The important thing is that when we sin we acknowledge our sin and make it right with God and those it affected as soon as possible. Remember “it is God which **worketh in you both to will and to do** of His good pleasure.”*

God Bless,

This document can be found at:

Thoughts on Christian Living

www.thoughtsonchristianliving.org