

Why We Must Be Born Again! John 3:1-7

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, & said unto Him,

‘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.’

Jesus answered & said unto him, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’

Nicodemus saith unto Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, & be born?’

Jesus answered, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water & of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; & that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.’

George Whitefield, that powerful English preacher who helped spread the Great Awakening in Britain, & especially, in the American colonies, was asked: “Why do you preach **so often** on the text, ‘Ye must be born again?’” He replied: “Because, you **must** be born again.” It is said the one half of his sermons were on this all important text.

This is the **most important issue** that confronts any individual in this present life. The most important asset of life is **not** how many possessions you have; how well cultured you are; how courteous you may be; how well educated you have become; or how clean a moral life you have lived. While these are commendable, & they produce a certain amount of happiness, **they do not prepare you for entrance into Heaven**. The critical question of life is: **Have you been born again?**

It doesn’t mean a second natural birth, as Nicodemus supposed. It does not mean merely the baptism with water, nor confirmation. It does not mean external reformation, or outward change. **Nor** is it only a correct creed, & public profession of religion. **It is obvious that being born again includes an entire change of heart!** It is rather a radical spiritual change of heart that comes through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Charles Spurgeon told of a missionary who visited a primitive hut & became completely nauseated by the filthy floor on which they had to sit. He suggested that they get some soap & water to scrub the dirty surface. The national replied, “The floor is just clay, packed down & dry. Add water & it turns to **mud**. The more you try to wash it, the worse the mess becomes!”

Yes, the hut needed something besides an **earthen floor**. So it is with the human heart: it is hard & dirty & nothing will help it. We do not need a **new start**; we need a **new heart!** My friends, **You Must Be Born Again!**

You may ask the question: “Why? Why must I be Born Again?” The answer to that question is found in this third chapter of John’s Gospel. So follow along in your Bibles, & discover the reason **why** you **must** be born again: --

1. You Must Be Born Again -- In Order to Be Saved!

Notice what Jesus says in verse 3, & in verse 5. In verse 3, “Jesus answered & said ... ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot **see** the kingdom of God.’” In verse 5, “Jesus answered, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water & of the Spirit, he cannot **enter** into the kingdom of God.’”

Jesus used three authoritative, emphatic, & categorical expressions to becoming a child of God, namely:

“Except a man; -- “he cannot”; -- “Ye must.” To make it very plain & simple, Jesus is saying, **you are not really a Christian until, or unless you have been born again! You are not really saved without this new birth!** You may come from a fine Christian family. You may have attended Sunday School & Church all of your life. You may be able to recite your favorite Bible passages. But unless you have been **Born from above** you are not yet part of God’s kingdom! You are not **saved**. You are not truly a Christian!

Notice those important words, “see” (3:3) & “enter” (3:5). We must be born again before we can ever **distinguish, or be admitted into** God’s kingdom.

You may see the beautiful huge **redwood tress** of California, but not the **Tree of Life**, unless your eyes are made clear by faith in Jesus Christ. You may behold the **beautiful rivers** of this earth, but your eyes will never upon the **River** which flows out from the Throne of God, unless you have been born again. You may go London & see the **crown of England**, which is set with over 6,000 gems, & is guarded by soldiers, but bear in mind that your eyes will never rest upon the “**crown of life**” except you are born again! You may travel the world over & see many **beautiful lighted cities**, but that **City of God** called **Heaven**, you shall never see unless you are born again.

In fact, you cannot “**see**.” Just put a period after the word “see.” Without the new birth, a spiritual birth that comes from above, no one can really “see.” No one can **outwardly conceive, or comprehend, or grasp** the Kingdom of God, without being born again. You can attend church, sing in the choir, pay your tithe, recite your prayers, **but unless you have been born again**, you are not a true child of God! Without the new birth **you are not yet a Christian**.

One day somebody asked a little slave girl: “Topsy, how old are you?” “Dunno,” she replied. “Well, when were you born?” they asked. “I ain’t never been borned; I just growed up.” I’m afraid that **too many church members are “Topsy Christians.”** They were never born spiritually; they just grew up in the Church. My friends, you must be born again in order to be truly **saved**, & become a child of God.

2. You Must Be Born Again -- In Order to Have Eternal Life & Go to Heaven!

Look at verses 15-17, “Whosoever believeth in Him (in Jesus Christ) should not perish, but have eternal life. 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. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” And then look at the first part of verse 36a, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.”

The new birth **implants** within us **Eternal Life!** Jesus describes Eternal Life in His High Priestly prayer found in John 17:3, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, & Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

This **natural life** is a **perishing life!** Because of sin **we all enter the world condemned to die twice!** We die once at the end of this physical life. And we die again at what the Bible calls the second death when both body & soul are separated from God **forever**. So when the Lord Jesus said: “You must be born again” **He was offering us the only way to escape that final hopeless condition of eternal separation from God;** the second death.

Jesus longs to give us new life from above! By acknowledging our sinfulness & trusting Christ for our salvation, we can **share in His resurrection power**, which takes the sting out of our physical death. If you are born only once, you will die twice! **But if you are born twice, you’ll die only once!** Those who have a **second birth** shall never experience the **second death**, which is eternal separation from God!

John 3:16 says if we believe in God's only begotten Son (Jesus Christ), **we shall not perish**. To perish is to be driven away into outer darkness, into eternal misery & woe, without deliverance, without end. But God's **gift**, described in verse 16, made it possible for us to **choose!** **We can choose to believe in God's Son!**

A godly pastor was told by his physician that his remaining time on earth was short. That evening he wrote: "I walked home thinking of the brevity of this life. I looked across at the mountains that I love, at the river in which I rejoice, & at the stately trees that are always God's own poetry to my soul. I looked up into the great sky where the Lord was just beginning to light His lamps, & I said: 'I may not see you many more times: but **mountains**, I shall be alive when you are gone; & **river**, I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; & **stars**, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets, when God pulls down this material universe.'" My friends, all who know the Lord Jesus as their Savior can have that same blessed confidence! But you **must be born again** in order to have eternal life & go to Heaven!

3. You Must Be Born Again -- In Order to Escape the Final Judgment!

Look at the last part of verse 36, "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

We choose between "belief" -- or "unbelief." We have already brought **condemnation** through our **unbelief**. Look at verse 18: "He that believeth on Him (Jesus Christ) is not condemned: but he that believeth **not** is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

My dear friends, there **is** a Judgment Day coming! Every hidden sin will be revealed. All hypocrisy will be brought to light. We will stand before the great judgment bar of God. It will be a day of **disappointment** for those who trusted in self, in water baptism, in their own good works, in past experiences, in future chances.

It will be a day of separation: the sheep from the goats; the good from the bad; the holy from the unholy; the saved from the unsaved; the Christian from the non-Christian; the born again from those who have not been born again! It will be a day of "good-byes": goodbye to praying mothers; to Christian fathers; to saintly church members; to hard preaching pastors; to altar calls. The way to escape the final judgment is simply to be Born Again!

A chicken is not a very intelligent creature. Well, I read recently about an exceptionally mixed-up bird. It seems this chicken had found a doorknob, the antique white porcelain kind, & had mistaken it for an egg. That's right; the hen was so ignorant she couldn't tell the difference between an egg & a doorknob! She had been missing from the flock for several days, & finally the farmer located her in a bunch of grass squatting firmly on her porcelain prize. She might have remained there many more days, had not the farmer robbed her of her unhatchable "egg."

You smile & say, "How dumb can a chicken be!" But dear friend, if you are unsaved, let me ask you, "**How foolish can a sinner be!**" In a real sense, they are just trying to hatch a "living chick" out of a "dead doorknob." Unless awakened by the Spirit of God, they will sit there until death overtakes them, & they are eternally lost! The Bible is so clear on this subject that in order for us to escape the final judgment **we must** believe on God's Son, & be born again. It takes the New Birth to escape the Judgment, & to make us **fit** for Heaven.

Conclusion: I ask you this morning, **Have you been born again?** In verses 3 & 5, Jesus says, "A man," that is "any man." It is a universal expression. It is true **not just** for Nicodemus. It is for every man, woman, boy or girl, who has ever lived. It is for **you** & for **you** & **you**, who are here today!

Calvin Coolidge served as vice president of the United States between 1921-23, before he succeeded to the Presidency upon the sudden death of Warren G. Harding in 1923. He was not a very active vice president, but he took great pleasure in presiding over the U. S. Senate. One day as he was presiding, a Senator angrily told another to “go straight to hell.” The offended Senator openly complained to Coolidge who was the presiding officer. Coolidge was leafing through the book of rules as the complaint was made. Coolidge finally looked up from the rule book & replied: “I’ve looked through the rule book. **You don’t have to go.**”

That, my friends, is the good news! We can look it up in God’s Book. No one **has** to perish; no one **has** to go to hell, for the Bible says: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” In the words of Jesus, you **can be** “born again.” In fact, you **must** be Born Again in order to be **saved**, in order to experience the gift of Eternal Life & **go to Heaven**, & in order to escape the **final judgment**.

When you are born again, you will know it! Your sins are forgiven; your life is immediately changed! The experience of the New Birth is most exciting & wonderful indeed! The New Birth is a transforming experience by which we become **partakers of the divine nature**. It is a **mystery** that cannot be explained, & it is a **reality** that cannot be **explained away!**

Oh dear friend, **begin this New Life today!** Bow your heart before God Almighty & say, “Oh, Christ, I do not understand it all, but in obedience to Your Holy Word, I trust you with **my soul**.” There will be no announcement of your new birth in the newspaper, **but it will be recorded up in Heaven**, in the Lamb’s Book of Life. You will pass from death to life, from the slavery of sin to the liberty of the child of God. The **New Birth** is not **optional**; it is **imperative!** “**You must be born again!**”

Rev. Lyle Pettit -- Calvary Baptist Church -- Benson, AZ
February 1, 2015 -- Sunday Morning