

HAVE YOU BEEN BORN AGAIN?

JESUS said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). These words were addressed to Nicodemus, a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, a prominent leader in the time of Christ. This man came to Jesus by night to inquire into the way of salvation. What does it mean to be born again?

The new birth is literally entering into a new life, a life that is entirely different from that which we have lived before. It is a life that is free from sin. The angel who announced the coming of Christ said: "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The soul that is saved of God, through Jesus, is saved from sin. So long as Jesus occupies the throne in the heart, He makes one a victor over sin. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him" (I John 3:6).

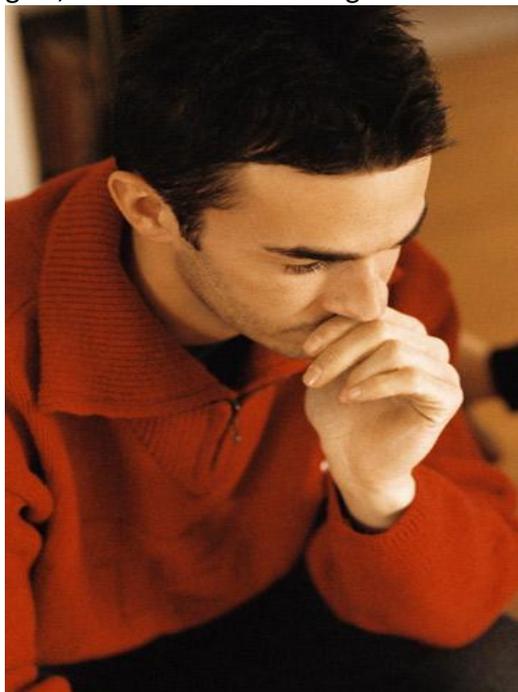
When one comes to God, confessing his sins with a broken and a contrite heart, and exercises faith in the Blood of Atonement, the Spirit bears witness that the work is done. And at that moment he is born again, born of God, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:23). "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (I John 3:24).

There is an abiding peace and joy, a freedom from condemnation, in the heart of one who is born again. The burden of sin is gone. The consciousness of guilt and condemnation has passed away. You have actually passed from death unto life, having been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God. Your name is written in Heaven. The well of Living Water, spoken of by Jesus, is springing up from your inmost soul. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

When one is born again, sinful habits are broken in a moment. One is delivered from the addiction to alcohol, tobacco, drugs. He is freed from all sin, including adultery and fornication and other sins of the flesh. The grace of God transforms the life. It makes one a "new creature" in Christ Jesus. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (I John 5:4).

The love for the things of the world goes out: the love for worldly amusements, theatres, cards and gambling, dances, immodest dress, desecrating the Lord's Day, filthy language, lodges, and secret orders. These things are all worldly in their very nature. "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:6, 7).



"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

The evidence of the new birth is a hatred for sin, and a distaste for worldly things. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

The love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. All hatred and malice is gone. Children of God love even their enemies. Those who are truly born of God immediately want to make restitution. If they have wronged their fellow men, or defrauded or stolen, they will confess to those they have wronged and make restitution as far as possible. Salvation will keep them from lying, cheating, stealing, leaving bills unpaid, and taking advantage of others.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7).

"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).

Sin is hideous in God's sight. Sin came into the world, in the beginning, through the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden and it drove them from the presence of God. Through their disobedience men were made sinners. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Christ alone has power to forgive sins and save from the power of sin.

Sin carries with it an awful curse. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "The sting of death is sin."

There is only one way out of sin and the bondage Satan has brought. It is through Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and only mediator between God and man. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18).