



Additional Note on Being Born Again

John 3:1-21

“Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born again” (John 3:3).

“Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit” (John 3:5).

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Prior In John 3:3, Jesus told Nicodemus “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above (or born again).” The Apostle Paul defined “the kingdom of God” in Romans 14:17, “For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” You cannot have or experience “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” as God intends until you are born again or born from above

People must be born again because every person has sinned. In Romans 3:23, Paul wrote, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” John defined sin in 1 John 3:4, “Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.” Everyone has acted lawlessly toward God and has broken the law of God as their conscience (unless hardened) and the Bible will testify to them. In Titus 3:3-7, Paul wrote, “For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

The loving foundation of our being born again and of our obtaining righteousness, peace with God, and the joyful presence of the Holy Spirit in our

lives is the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, upon the cross and His resurrection from the dead—the Good News. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul declared the Good News: “Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.”

In John 3:3, Jesus said you cannot see the kingdom of God unless you are born again, and in John 3:5, Jesus said you cannot enter the kingdom of God unless you are born again: “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.” On Pentecost Sunday, Peter told a crowd that was convinced of their sin (lawlessness and law-breaking) and who had come to believe that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah that to be born again, they must “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Baptismal water symbolizes total cleansing, and in the Bible water is used for cleansing hands and feet and other objects. Moral and spiritual cleansing begins when someone repents (turns from) their sins, but they cannot be cleansed from their sins by water, which only cleanses the outer body. Believers in Jesus Christ can only be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ when He died on the cross, as John wrote in 1 John 1:7, “If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” Baptism does not save us, but when a believer is baptized, they confess their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The thief on the cross could not be baptized, but he was born again and saved when he turned to Jesus. If he could have come down from the cross (because he had become a new person, a new creation), he would have lived a new way of life; however, he would begin to live a new way of life when he entered paradise that very day, because those who are born again become new creations, as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” Believers in Jesus are born again and saved from their sins and eternal death, and by grace Jesus gives them eternal life, as Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works,

which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” By the grace of Jesus Christ, what the thief on the cross believed and told Jesus, and what those who believed and did what Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, allowed them to enter the kingdom of God where they truly experienced, “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” In some measure, after the thief spoke to Jesus and before he died on the cross beside Jesus, he experienced, “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Those who repented and came to faith in Jesus Christ on the Day of Pentecost and the thief on the cross were born again in the way Jesus described in John 3:6, “What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.” They learned enough truth about Jesus and what He taught that through the work of the Holy Spirit they were born of the Spirit. God has not revealed how He does this, but those who are born again are born of the Spirit, as Jesus taught in John 3:8, “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

To be born again, Nicodemus had to receive the witness or testimony of Jesus and believe what He said. Furthermore, the Son of Man, Jesus, had to be lifted up, which meant Jesus had to die on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins (see John 3:10-14). Jesus gave His definitive answer on how to be born again and the eternal consequences of being born again in John 3:15-21, telling Nicodemus (and us), “Whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”