

Born Again
John 3:1-7

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

We hear a lot of folks _____ about being “born again.” What does that mean? We explore God’s Word because it contains the words of _____ life. It teaches the most important lessons and it gives us _____. Today we’re asking: what does it _____ to be “born again” or “born from above”? Is it some kind of “better _____ than told” experience? Is it some _____ feeling? Some people speak of “born again” Christians as if they were a _____ kind of Christian; but, the fact is one must be “born again” to be a Christian at all. Since there is a lot of _____ about what it means to be “born again,” it’s worth our while to go back to the Bible and see what God says about being “born again.”

Born again . . . Within the heart of most people is the _____ to start over. We see our _____ and we regret our past. We wish we could start over and do things differently. Some people even _____ the person that they’ve become and they just wish they could be somebody else. The Lord gives us that opportunity, an opportunity to put _____ the old sinful person and to put _____ the new man in Christ, to change our lives, our attitudes, and our behavior. Today we’re going to explore what this means and how this happens.

Our reading today comes from The Gospel According to John 3:1-7.

Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, said, “Rabbi, we know that you’re a _____ come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” The Lord Jesus is indeed the Son of God, but what He told Nicodemus was _____. Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, _____ one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The words “truly, truly,” show that He is _____. The word “truly” in Greek actually is the word “_____.”

Nicodemus questions, “How can a man be born when he is _____? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” (verse 4). Nicodemus, as a ruler of the Jews, should have understood what Jesus was talking about. Gentiles who became proselytes were thought to be “born again” when they were _____. Nicodemus was not a proselyte. He couldn’t imagine being compared to one of them.

Jesus makes it clear, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot _____ the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’” (John 3:5-7). Even a ruler of the Jews needed what Jesus required for eternal life.

Jesus said, “You *must* be born again.” That little word “must” means it’s necessary if you want to _____ God. “Must” refers to a “moral necessity.” Jesus later said that he “must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day” (Matthew 16:21). Jesus saw the _____ as necessary. If you or I enter the _____ of heaven, we must first be born again of water and the Spirit. No matter who we are—even Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, had to be born again in baptism to go to heaven.

The baptism of Jesus was a birth of _____ and the _____. Both water and Spirit were involved. Water is involved in that baptism is a _____ in water, an immersion. The Holy Spirit is involved through the _____. Peter explains this, “Since you have in obedience to the _____ purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding _____ of God” (1 Peter 1:22-23).

Without the preaching of the _____, we would not believe or know what we must do in order to obey the truth. But it’s in obeying the truth that we _____ our souls and are born again of the Word. The Word is an *imperishable* seed, and it’s for _____ generations. As a seed, what it produced in the first century, it will produce _____. That’s how we know we are Christians today like they were in the first century; we have obeyed the _____ gospel that they did.

The gospel produces _____ in us. The Bible says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). The more we _____ to God’s Word, the greater our faith will become. One listens, then because of faith, he wants to _____ that gospel. It’s when the Word works on our heart that it brings about _____ in life and we become a new person—truly born of the Spirit by His seed, the Word.

The Bible _____ this new birth, and where we came from, and how God has blessed us. “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of _____ which we have done in righteousness, but according to His _____, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:3-7). We needed God’s _____; and we needed saving! He was willing to do that through the washing of regeneration.

God’s grace and mercy saved us. We didn’t _____ it; God gave us His grace _____ “the washing of regeneration” and the “renewing by the Holy Spirit.” The phrase “washing of regeneration” refers to a washing that _____ one to be regenerated, that is “born again.” This “washing” is a clear reference to _____ as the time of the cleansing from sin and being born from above. Let me emphasize that it is God who washes us and the Spirit who renews us. We are washed in the _____ of Jesus who died for us. Some people think baptism is a work of _____; but in baptism _____ does the work of cleansing, regenerating, and renewing.

How do we get this new life? The Bible says, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His _____? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in _____ of life. For if we’ve become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be _____ to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin” (Romans 6:3-7).

To be reborn, one must first _____ to self and to sin. You’re either a servant of sin or a servant of the Lord. It’s only when you’re crucified with Christ in baptism that you die to the old man of sin,

and then you can be _____ to walk in newness of life—and be reborn! That’s the real _____ of bearing a cross. Jesus said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must _____ himself, take up his cross daily and _____ Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it” (Luke 9:23-24).

That new life _____ at baptism but lasts our whole life through. When you’re baptized, you’re born into the _____ of God. Jesus said, “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the _____ to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, and who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:11-13). By faith in God’s Word, we _____ Christ. We purify our _____ by obedience to the truth (1 Peter 1:22). This is why we don’t question if we should be baptized; we do it out of _____ to obey Him and to be pure. It’s obedience to the Word, the seed, that opens the door for us to be born again by God.

When you’re born again in baptism, you become a _____ creature. The Bible says, “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the _____ things passed away; behold, _____ things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). In Christ the old man of sin has been put away, crucified with Christ, so that a new man in Christ has come to be.

Ephesians 4:17-24 describes the _____ that not only takes place spiritually but also in our lives day to day. “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that’s in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you didn’t learn Christ in this way, if indeed you’ve heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, that you lay aside the _____ self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the _____ self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” The new birth _____ hearts, attitudes, desires and purposes. The new person wants to be like the Lord in all holiness.

This is the kind of life a Christian should live when he’s born again. Ephesians 4:25-32 goes on and describes this. “Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one *of you* with his neighbor, for we are _____ of one another. Be angry, and *yet* do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome _____ proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who _____. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has forgiven you.”

Christians leave the sinful and turn to the holy in _____ because they become like Christ. Paul said, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, and joy, and peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23). A

person who is born of the Spirit shows these things.

When you're born into the family of God, you have God as your _____. As a Father, God protects, provides, guides, instructs, and corrects. God gives His children the privilege of _____, listening to every request and every concern. He not only listens; He _____. In Christ, we're deeply blessed. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every (every, every) spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ." Being born into the family of God gives us _____ the privileges of God's favor and it gives us an inheritance. We are fellow-heirs with Christ.

When you're born into God's family, the Lord _____ you to the church and He _____ your name in the Lamb's Book of Life. God says, "So then you're no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow _____ with the saints, and you are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22). You can do _____ more important than to be born again!

God wants you to be born again and to come into His family so He can love you and be close to you. So put your _____ in Him and turn away from sin. When you out of love obey Him in baptism, He'll crucify the old man of sin and cause you to be born again. Oh, what a blessing!

Being born again _____ our lives entirely. Peter said of Christians, "But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

We turn from being a "nobody" to being "somebody" with God. We turn from shame to being a saint and from darkness to light. That's what it means to be born again, God's great blessing!

Some people ask the question, "Can God really make me over?" They feel so _____ of their past, they don't believe they can live the Christian life. Oh, my friend, there's _____ news for you. If you want to change—I mean really want to become a child of God—there's _____ in the heart of God for you. The apostle Paul wasn't always an apostle. He was once Saul of Tarsus, a man who blasphemed Christ and persecuted Christians. He described himself as the _____ of sinners, since he had violently persecuted the church. Paul said, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*" (1 Timothy 1:15-16). The Lord loves _____ person on this earth, and the people He died for were all _____.

Paul continues, "Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life." The Lord will also show you patience. You can go to heaven. You can be saved from all your sins and live eternally. How? You *must* be born again by believing with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ; repenting of your sins; confessing the name of Jesus; and by being baptized (that is, immersed in water) for the forgiveness of your sins. That opportunity is yours if you'll take it and receive it. Don't just believe, act on your faith!