

## Are You Really "Born Again"?

In this study, let us consider together: *Exactly how is a person "born again"?*

### How Important Are Hearing and Believing?

#### Must One Hear the Gospel?

1 Peter 1:22-25 – We are born again by incorruptible seed, which is the word of God. When people hear the gospel, believe and obey, they are "born again." (James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15.)

Galatians 6:7 – But we reap what we sow. If one accepts a message *different* from the gospel, he would not be born again, even though he might believe he had been (1:8,9).

#### Must One Believe the Gospel?

John 1:12 – Jesus gives the right to become children of God to those who believe in Him. Note that believing, by itself, does not immediately make one a child of God.

John 1:13 – We can be born again only by following the will of God, not man's will. ***The only way to know we are born again is by knowing what God's word says.***

(Matthew 7:21-23; 15:9,13; Galatians 1:8,9; 2 John 9-11; Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; 3:5,6]

#### Consider Other Passages.

John 6:44,45 – To come to Jesus one must hear, learn, be taught from the Father.

John 8:31,32,24 – To be free from sin we must know the truth and believe in Jesus

Romans 1:16 – The gospel is the power of God to save those who believe.

Romans 10:17 – Faith comes by hearing God's word.

Can you find passages in the Bible that prove you have done what you should to be born again?

(John 6:63; Hebrews 11:6; John 3:3-7; Galatians 3:26,27)

### How Important Is Obedience, Including Baptism?

#### How Important Is Obedience?

1 Peter 1:22-25 – Being born again requires purifying our souls by obeying the truth

Romans 6:17,18 – We are freed of sin as a result of obeying the doctrine delivered.

Hebrews 5:9 – Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

2 Thessalonians 1:8,9 – Those who do not obey will be punished with flaming fire

Matthew 7:21-23 – To enter the kingdom we must do the will of the Father.

#### How Important Is Baptism?

2 Corinthians 5:17 – If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (born again). So, how do we to come "into Christ"? (2 Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 5:11,12; Romans 8:1.)

Romans 6:3,4 – We are baptized into Christ, baptized "into His death."

Verses 6,7 - The body of sin is then put to death and we are free from sin (verses 17,18).

Verse 4 – When we are buried in baptism and raised with Christ, we have newness of life

Galatians 3:26,27 – As many as were baptized into Christ, have put Christ on. But remember we are born again only when we are in Christ. Note the verb tenses:

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were (or have been) baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

**THIS**

You **were** baptized into Christ

must come **BEFORE**

**THIS**

You **are** sons of God.

This must happen "by faith" because faith gives one the right to become a child of God. But only **after** faith has led to **baptism** is one a child of God (born again). Note also:

Mark 16:15,16 – To be saved, one must believe **and** be baptized.

Acts 2:38 – Everyone must repent and be baptized for remission of sins.

Acts 22:16 – One who believed in Jesus was told to be baptized and wash away his sins

1 Peter 3:21 – Baptism also now saves us

To be born again, one must believe in Jesus, repent of sin, confess Christ, and be baptized.

### A Summary Passage – John 3:3-7

The new birth involves two elements: the “water” and the “Spirit.”

#### What Is the “Water”?

***Some say that “water” here refers to physical birth. However:***

(1) “Water” is nowhere used in the New Testament to refer to physical birth.

(2) Physical birth was brought up by Nicodemus, because he misunderstood. Jesus then **contrasted** physical birth and the new birth, showing they are **different** (verse 6).

(3) Verse 5 just clarifies and explains verse 3. So, the “water” of verse 5 is **part** of the new birth; it does not refer to some **other** birth.

***“Water” in John 3:5 refers to water baptism.***

(1) Baptism is the only command in the New Testament that necessarily involves the use of “water” (Acts 8:35-39; 10:47; John 3:23; Hebrews 10:22; etc.).

(2) We already learned that many passages teach water baptism is essential to salvation.

(3) And several passages express baptism as being an essential element of the new birth.

(4) And many passages tie baptism to the hearing of the gospel, exactly like John 3:5 does.

#### What Is the “Spirit”?

Before baptism, one must learn and believe the word, the **seed** by which we are born again (1 Peter 1:23). The Holy Spirit revealed the word and caused it to be taught so people might learn it and be saved (2 Peter 1:21; Ephesians 3:3-5; John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13).

Ephesians 6:17 - The word is the sword of the Spirit. Note some parallels:

John 3:5 – Be born of **water** and the spirit.

Mark 16:15,16 – Preach the gospel. He who believes and is **baptized** will be saved.

Acts 2:41 – Those who gladly received the word were **baptized**.

Acts 8:12 – People who believed the preaching were **baptized**. (8:35-39; 16:32,33; 18:8)

Ephesians 5:26 – Jesus cleansed the church by **washing of water** with the word.

So one is “born of water and the Spirit” when one learns and believes the gospel, which was revealed by the Spirit, and then obeys that message by being baptized.

#### Conclusions

One can be born again only by obeying the pure seed, the word of God. But suppose a person is baptized believing the common doctrine that he is born again **before** or without baptism. Would he be baptized for the right reasons? Would he be baptized “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), so the blood of Jesus could cleanse his sins (Acts 22:16), so he could be born again and become a child of God (Romans 6:3,4; Galatians 3:26,27; John 3:3,5; etc.)?

Now, if baptism is necessary to be born again, but one’s baptism is not done properly, what is his condition? He needs to do what was done by the men in Acts 19:1-5. They had been “baptized” (immersed) but not with the proper understanding of its purpose. So, they needed to be baptized Scripturally.

Being “born again” must then begin a lifetime of obedient service. One must “**walk** in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). A child of God must submit to His Father (1 Peter 2:1,2; Matthew 12:50; 2 Corinthians 6:17,18; 1 John 3:1-10). He must be active in the work of His Father’s family, the church (1 Timothy 3:15). As a child of God, he must grow up in Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

Have you been truly born again? If so, are you serving the Father faithfully?

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