

Being Dead in Sin and Being Born Again

Dear Reader,

To be born again spiritually in Jesus Christ (also known as regeneration) is a necessary part of salvation.

Jesus taught Nicodemus this: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Nicodemus was puzzled: “born again”? No grown man can enter his mother’s womb a second time, and be born again bodily! Jesus explained: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

To be born again is to be born of the Spirit, to possess the life of the risen Jesus Christ, to understand spiritual things of God, and to have a relationship with the true God.

We must be born again. But . . . why?

Dead in sin.

We must be born again because, apart from God’s grace, all humans are dead in sin.

This is the teaching of Ephesians 2:1: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” To be “quickened” is to be made alive; it refers to God’s wonderful work of regeneration. This making alive was necessary, because apart from it, humans are dead in sin.

Dead in sin? What does this mean?

This refers to spiritual death - the death of one’s soul. The human nature consists of two basic parts - body and soul. The body is material and physical - by it we are connected to this earth. The soul is spiritual - by it we are connected to God and spiritual things.

Man’s soul was once alive. Not during your lifetime, or mine; but God created the whole human race in Adam (a literal, historical man) as God’s friends, enjoying His life, able to obey His law. *Adam’s* life was *God’s* life in him - God had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul (Genesis 2:7).

Adam’s soul died when Adam sinned (Genesis 2:17). His sin brought death also upon the whole human race. Romans 5:12 says that “by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”.

What kind of death? The death of our bodies, certainly. But also the death of our souls. Sin severed our spiritual connection with God, our life of friendship with Him. Sin brought us into bondage to the devil, which Paul describes as “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2).

So when God causes us to be born again, He restores us to that privileged position which Adam originally had. He destroys the power of spiritual death, works in us the life of the risen Christ, makes us His friends again, and gives us the power to live like Him!

We must be born again, to become God’s children, to be citizens of God’s kingdom, members of Jesus Christ’s church.

Unable to Cause Ourselves to be Born.

Man must *be* born again - that is, it is *necessary* that man be born again. But the sentence is passive - someone else must cause him to be born again! Man cannot be born again by his own work. No man begins the process, helps the process continue, or contributes at the end of the process.

For, in the first place, being born again is not a process - it is a miracle which God works

in us instantaneously!

Secondly, this being born again can be compared, not so much to a baby's *delivery* after a period of gestation, but to a baby's *conception*. As no baby can contribute to its own conception, because it did not exist before that conception, so no human can contribute to his being born again, because spiritually he was dead before that.

Jesus teaches that God gives this spiritual birth: those who are regenerated, are born "of water and the Spirit." God does it, by His Spirit.

The inspired apostle Paul emphasizes that God gives this spiritual birth: while we were "dead in sins," God "quickened us together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:1, 5).

Jesus' resurrection from the dead shows that God alone gives this birth: Jesus, now in heaven at God's right hand, is alive to work His new life in all for whom He died.

And the apostle Paul teaches us *why* we play no role in our being born again: to emphasize that we are saved "by grace, through faith," which salvation and faith are "not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," apart from any works of man, "lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

God's children recognize that God has done that which was necessary, but which was impossible for us to do: give us new life in Christ!

Recognizing this, we must *live* this life - live a life of praise to God, in obedience to God's law, because God is our Savior and Redeemer from sin!

Pastor Douglas Kuiper

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:23

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Titus 3:5

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

1 Peter 1:23