

Rom. 14:19
"So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another."

John 8:32
"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

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BORN AGAIN

by Greg Gwin

Have you wondered about the phrase which describes certain individuals as "born again Christians"? What does that mean any way? Is a "born again Christian" in some way different than other Christians? And how exactly does a person get that way?

While the words "born again" and "Christian" are certainly found in the Bible, it is of note that they are never found together as the popular usage has it today. In fact, the phrase "born again Christian" is obviously redundant. Every person who is a Christian has, of necessity, been born again. This becomes apparent as we examine the rebirth that is described in the Scriptures.

Jesus first introduced the idea of being born again in **John 3:3-5**. He said, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"*. When asked for an explanation, He added, *"except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"*. Many have wondered as to what exactly Jesus meant when He spoke of the role of water and the Spirit in the new birth. Other passages shed valuable light on this matter.

In **I Peter 1:23**, we read once more of being *"born again"*. Here Peter says we are, *"born again . . . by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever"*. Knowing that the Holy Spirit caused the inspired word to be written, we have thus discovered the work of the Spirit in this rebirth. His work is found in the instructions of the Scriptures which lead us to obey the Lord.

But what about the water? Look to **Romans 6:4** ...
"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into

death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." There is the water; it is the water of baptism, from which we rise to *"walk in newness of life"*. Now, think for a moment: *"newness of life"*, that phrase speaks to us of a new birth, of being *"born again"*.

And so we have it, what it takes to be *"born again"*, *"born of water and the Spirit"*. It is to be instructed by God's holy word, and to be obedient to its commands, including baptism in water.

Have you been *"born again"*? Or, perhaps even more simply, are you really a Christian? There is nothing mysterious about the process, as some would have you to believe. Instead, you can be born again just as every other true Christian has ever been, by learning God's law, and obeying His commands.

WHEN IS THE PENITENT BELIEVER SAVED?

All responsible people are guilty of sin (**Rom.3:23**). Sin has a payday; and when people persist in sin, they will face the wrath of God (**Romans 6:23**). The only way men can be saved from sin is by the blood of Jesus Christ. The fact that this is taught in the Bible does not mean that all accept this truth. The fact that men have concocted many supposed ways by which they can be saved, is proof that they resist what God says. At what point in man's response to God is he

saved by the blood of Christ? What does the Bible say about this matter?

Some insist that God will save everyone. Everyone will go to heaven, and no one will go to hell. That is a convenient and comforting teaching. Is it true? Jesus spoke of two ways, one broad, the other narrow. The broad way leads to destruction, while the narrow way leads to life (**Matthew 7:13-14**). Jesus certainly didn't have the idea that everyone was going to be saved, even though that is His desire. Some say that a person is saved at the precise moment he or she believes in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. This is another way of saying that we are "justified by faith alone." Some say that justification is by faith alone "without works of any kind." Others speak of being "ordained to eternal life." The result is that a person is not baptized to be saved, but because he has already been saved. This says that faith is the only condition of salvation, and that baptism has nothing to do with being saved.

A number of passages show other important considerations in the matter of salvation. For example, **Acts 2:38**, speaks about baptism; it also speaks about repentance. So, is salvation by faith alone, or is it by faith plus repentance? **James 2:24** talks about the faith of Abraham, saying that faith without works is dead and that man is not justified by faith alone. Whom shall we believe, God or man? Jesus spoke about believing, which all admit is necessary to salvation; He also said you must be baptized in order to be saved (**Mark 16:15-16**). Does the Lord know as much about this as man knows? Baptism stands between the sinner and being saved. Who is saved? He that believes and is not baptized, or he that believes and is baptized? Baptism stands between the sinner and the remission of sins. That is what Peter said on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:38**). Peter and the other apostles were simply preaching what Jesus told them to preach (**Luke 24:44**). The people on Pentecost asked the question: What must we do to be saved? Peter said: *"Repent and be baptized."* Those folks believed; otherwise, why would they ask what they needed to do?

Baptism stands between the sinner and becoming a son of God (**Galatians 3:26-27**). The believer has the right or opportunity to become a child of God (**John 1:12**). Yet, if he became a son of God when he believed, he would not have to become one, would he? If he believed, as some say, he would already be a child of

God. Paul says that men are baptized into Christ. Baptism also stands between the sinner and having his sins washed away. Saul of Tarsus was told to be baptized to have his sins washed away (**Acts 22: 16**). He believed who Jesus was. Yet, this did not mean that he was saved. If he was already saved at the point of faith, then there wasn't anything to wash away. The New Testament also teaches that baptism stands between the sinner and getting into Christ. The only way to get into Christ is to be baptized into Christ (**Romans 6:3-4**). If you can be saved without being baptized, then you can be saved without Christ. Who would be so foolish to say that a person can be saved without Christ? Have you obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ? Why not?

Randy Harshbarger

Giving: Ananias and Sapphira **Don Wright**

Sadly, not all the examples of giving in the Bible are good ones. The unfortunate actions of Ananias and Sapphira, recorded in **Acts 5**, remind us that the mere act of giving is not enough.

"But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God (vs. 1-4)

Peter was not asking Ananias these questions to garner a response, but rather, to provoke repentance on his behalf. The "why" behind the actions of Ananias, as well as his wife, Sapphira, was obvious. They were not of one heart and soul with the other brethren who were selling their property and laying the proceeds at the apostle's feet.

Those Christians gave generously because of their love for their brethren (**Acts 4:32-35**). Ananias and Sapphira were selfish, but they wanted everyone to think they were generous and that they loved the brethren. Their giving was hypocritical. What do we learn from the bad example of Ananias and Sapphira?

We learn that why we give is more important than how much we give. If the reason for our giving is sincere, the amount will take care of itself. Ananias and Sapphira were not obligated to give all the money they made from the selling of their property. Peter reminded Ananias that while the proceeds from their property were still in their possession, they could do whatever they wanted to do with it (**Acts 5:4**). They were obligated, however, to be honest about it. The truth is, if they did not want to give to the cause in the first place, they should not have given anything. *"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"* (**2 Cor. 9:7**). The word "reluctantly" comes from a Greek word that points to sadness or grief. You should never feel grief for giving to the poor or to the cause of Christ. Instead, you should feel a sense of joy and appreciation that God has given you the means to give.

Another thing you should never do is give out of a sense of obligation alone. Yes, we are obligated to give to the Lord on the first day of the week (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**), but our giving should be based on more than mere duty. To give only under compulsion is to demonstrate that you have forgotten how good God has been to you. The love that moved God to give His only Son for us, should cause us to want to give back to Him.

Avoid following the example of Ananias and Sapphira when you give. Make sure that your giving is sincere, showing love for whoever, it is to whom you are giving. If you are giving to the Lord, give cheerfully; after all, the cause you are giving to is the greatest in the world. If you are giving to help the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give discreetly, and let your motivation be the love that you have for others. This is the kind of giving that will be rewarded by God.

25th Street Bulletin

True Life

The goal of the gospel is to prepare people for heaven. Its emphasis centers upon happiness in a life to come rather than upon this life. "For what profit is it to a man," Jesus once asked, "if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" The Lord would teach us to look through faith beyond the suffering and heartaches of

this life to a life free of suffering and heartaches; to lay up treasures in heaven rather than upon the earth. He wants us in our preaching to proclaim a message of salvation through His blood, to bring to people's consideration those things that are eternal. But when we succeed in leading men and women to surrender their lives in favor of the life to come, we lead them into gaining, not only heaven, but also the peace and contentment that make for real happiness upon this earth. "He who finds his life shall lose it," Jesus said, "and he who loses his life for my sake shall find it."

by Bill Hall

Man-eating lion evangelism

The Samaritan race resulted from the intermarriages of Mesopotamian pioneers Assyria relocated to Israel after the Northern Kingdom was carried into captivity in 722 bc. When the settlers moved in, they brought their pagan gods with them. As a consequence, they experienced a Ghost and the Darkness moment (if you haven't seen the movie, which is based on a true story, it's a good one) when God *"sent lions among them, which killed some of them"* (**2 Kgs. 17:25**). Seeing in the lion attacks some sort of omen, the Gentile settlers appealed to the king of Assyria for help, and he sent them an apostate Israelite priest to teach them *"the rituals of the God of the land"* (**17:26**). The result of their religious instruction was that *"they feared the Lord"* (**17:33**) and recognized Jehovah as *"the God of the . land"* (**17:26**). But they *"yet served their own gods"* (**v 33**).

Samaria was a God-fearing nation the same way America is a Christian nation. America, like Samaria, fears the Lord so long as that doesn't impinge on serving its own gods—e.g., money, power, perversity, godlessness. It doesn't matter that we put "In God we trust" on our coins—I wouldn't be surprised to learn the Samaritans put "We fear the Lord" on their shekels. Platitudes such as "In God we trust" and "one nation, under God" might lull some into a false sense of piety, but the reality known to God is that the Samaritans and America *"do not fear the Lord"* (**17:34**).

Do you know what this means? It means the fields are white unto harvest! It means there is gospeling to be done and sinners to be saved. Pray the Lord of harvest to send forth laborers—and maybe some lions—into His harvest.

Kenny Chumbley

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

- Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study
- Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
- Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
- Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.
Lenexa, Kansas 66216
913-620-0563

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Bill Miller
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NEWS AND NOTES:

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ALMA BAUMGARTNER, DENESE GORING, BROOKLYN BOYER, TRACY RICHARDSON, MATT BASSFORD, WAYNE MOODY, TONY MAUCK, BOB OWEN, DAVID AND JOANNE BECKLEY, MARK WALKER, PAT AND ED MCLLOUD, PENNY STAUFFER, ELLIE GOLDSTON. AND WINNIE RAWSON.

Bible Classes: Sunday Morning
Prayer - Ron Peck

Wednesday Evening - **Minor Prophets - Jim Stauffer**

Sunday Sermon: **Calling on the Name of the Lord**



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- ▶ **Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17
- ▶ **Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6
- ▶ **Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30
- ▶ **Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10
- ▶ **Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38
- ▶ **Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10