
Fresh Start

One of the terms that Christ used in the Gospel of John, was included in his statement to Nicodemus in the third verse of the third chapter: Jesus replied, “I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God.” (NLB) The words ‘born again’ have taken on a very significant meaning in the understanding of most of the evangelical church. If you were to ask what it means to be ‘born again’, you would likely be told that it means to accept Christ as your Lord and Saviour. I’m going to heaven when I die!

It might be good for us to reflect on what Christ really meant when he told Nicodemus he must be born again. Accepting Christ as Lord and Saviour, going to heaven, certainly is part of what He meant, but I believe it may go further than our commonly held concepts.

He was telling Nicodemus that he must begin life anew, make a fresh start, live life differently than how he had been living. He must see that his old way of life as a devout religious Pharisee simply did not cut it. Christ was telling him that he must begin a new life produced by the Holy Spirit from Heaven (Jn 3:6 NLB). He was telling him, that to live as part of the Kingdom of Heaven, he must set aside his former way of doing things. Being ‘born again’ suggests that not only are you going to be newly born again, but you must also learn to live your life in a new way. Just as in the physical realm you must gradually learn to live following your birth, so it is in the spiritual realm. We need to trade the old ‘our way’ for the new ‘God’s way’. Allow God to clean the inside of the cup and then the outside will be clean as well. What lies hidden in your heart that you would not find in Christ’s? That is what needs to be changed. That is the purpose of being ‘born again’.

Could it be that many to-day willingly accept, or maybe only understand, the salvation part, to get to heaven when they die, but have missed out on the cleansing of their lives as a result of desiring and experiencing a change on the inside. We have often heard the ‘thou shalt’ and the ‘thou shalt not’s’, the outward changes, but Christ wants us ‘to be’ what He showed us by His example. He wants us to yield, to submit, our hearts, our will, our spirit, to the changing power of the Holy Spirit, to see the new birth as a beginning point of a new way of living, a new life under God’s direction. He wants us to live in the “Kingdom of Heaven” now, and for eternity. The old for the new – it’s a good trade!

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To be continued ...