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This topical Bible study is for God's glory
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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in **red text**.

Note: It is recommended to first read “3 Types of Death 1 Source of Life” (on UniqueBibleStudies.com) before reading this Bible study. “3 Types of Death 1 Source of Life” provides a “broader foundation” for understanding spiritual death and why we need to be born again.

The purpose of this writing is to explain why we cannot earn our way to Heaven; expand biblical understanding of what it means to be born again, facilitate self-evaluation, and to enhance spiritual growth and maturity in Christ.

So, to begin, let’s start with some thought-provoking questions:

- If someone asked you if you are a Christian...how would you respond? Think about what you would say.
- Now take a moment and think about the type of responses you’d get if you randomly ask a number of persons if they are a Christian. For those who respond yes, if you ask them how do they know they are a Christian you will likely hear different answers such as:
 1. *“I was born as a Christian because my family is Christian.”*
 2. *“I was baptized as an infant.”*
 3. *“I treat everyone fairly and with respect.”*
 4. *“I try to follow the 10 Commandments.”*
 5. *“I attend a church; I’ve read the Bible and I pray.”*
 6. *“I consider myself a good person.”*
 7. *“I trust in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord and I strive to follow Him in every area of life.”*
- Based upon the above responses, take a moment and consider the perception of each person and ask yourself the following question: Does this person perceive they are a Christian based upon:
 - Birthright?
 - Works (participating in religious rituals, external behavior or good deeds)?
 - Believing, trusting and following Jesus Christ?
- Which response do you think more accurately reflects Christianity? Why?

Unfortunately, the first 6 responses represent the perception of a large percentage of those who say they are Christian. What’s more, the 7th response is radically different from the first 6. The reason the last answer is completely different from the others is because of a spiritual and transformational event that has occurred in the person’s life—an event referred to by Jesus Christ as being born again.

Being a Christian is not a birthright; not based upon religious rituals; not based upon our words; and is not based upon good behavior. It is based upon the heart of each believer, being born again and the work of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus met with Nicodemus (a religious ruler of the Jews) Jesus informed him we must be born again to see the kingdom of God. **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** John 3:3

Nicodemus did not understand “born again” because his perception (like many of us) was within the physical realm. **“Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’”** John 3:4

Although Jesus lived in the physical realm, He continually spoke from a spiritual perspective. His miracles, teachings, parables and the Bible are intended to enlighten our understanding of spiritual realities and heavenly truths. Being born again is a spiritual rebirth—facilitated by the Holy Spirit—which transforms the heart and soul as one yields his/her life to their Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter 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

Ephesians 2:1-10 reveals the spiritual transformation that occurs when one is born again. Versus 1-3 expose the spiritual death that is associated with sin. Versus 4-10 reveal the new eternal life after being born again.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.” Ephesians 2:1-3

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:4-10

Spiritual Death to Spiritual Life

Being born again is comprised of a transition from being spiritually dead—to being spiritually alive—as we begin a new life living in the unmerited grace and forgiveness God gave us in His Son, Jesus Christ. God’s forgiveness for our sins (past, present and future) is His spiritual means to crucify our sinful nature, and change our heart and soul.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Ephesians 2:1

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” Colossians 2:13-15

This table provides a comparison between the characteristics of one who is spiritually dead, and the Holy Spirit transformed attributes of one who is born again.

| Spiritually Dead | Born Again |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Earthly perception (focus) | Spiritual perception (insight/awareness) |
| Seeks to fulfill the desires of the flesh | Seeks to fulfill the desires of God |
| Loves their sin | Hates their sin |
| Persists in sin | Repents from sin |
| Sin perceived as having no internal consequences | Sin results in guilt, shame, remorse |
| Is unaware of the depths of their sin | Has insight into depths of their sin |
| Dead in trespasses and sin | Made alive with Christ |
| Reliance upon self | Reliance upon faith and God’s grace |
| Salvation is based upon being good (works) | Salvation is an unmerited gift from God in Jesus Christ |
| Controlled by Satan | Drawn into righteousness by God’s love |
| Hides from God | Seeks God |
| Judgmental for what people do | Forgiving of what people do |
| Self-centered | Selfless |
| Self-righteous | Humble |
| Self-promotion/advancement | Desires to glorify Jesus Christ |
| Living in darkness | Living in the light of Jesus |
| Unforgiven | Forgiven |
| Eternal death | Eternal life |

It is very important to note here that no one is perfect—including those who are born again. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23 In addition, all born-again Christians are at various stages of spiritual growth and maturity as they transition from the left side of the table to the right side. However, one key evidence that differentiates a born-again Christian (from one who is spiritually dead) is found in how a born-again Christian will respond when they sin. Their response is driven by the desire and attitude of their heart, and a continually growing love for God—which is demonstrated by:

- Regret and sorrow for their sin because they know it displeases God.
- A confession to God of what was done and asking Him for forgiveness.
- Repentance (will turn away from the sin).

God’s work in each born-again life will not be finished until we leave our bodies (which have a sinful nature), and are with Him on the other side. Meanwhile, it’s about doing our best and trusting God to complete what He began. But what is even more important: God is more interested in our heart, than He is with what we do, or fail to do.

For example, King David was referred to by God as a man after His own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). What’s more, God made a covenant with King David that his throne would last forever (2 Samuel 7:16). However, as his power, wealth and kingdom grew, King David committed what many would consider atrocious and unforgivable sins: adultery with Bathsheba and killed Bathsheba’s husband to hide his sin (2 Samuel 11).

Most persons would find it difficult to forgive someone for this type of behavior. However, “For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

David realized what he had done, confessed and repented of his sin, and God forgave him (2 Samuel 12). God is merciful and is “Not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9

Born Again = Internal Transformation

Those who are born again can testify to the transformation that occurs within the heart, soul and spirit...and to the absolute truth of the scriptures below.

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14

“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:3-7

Born-again Christianity is more than just saying “I’m a Christian.”

Being born again encompasses:

- Faith in God.
- A belief that His Son, Jesus Christ, died for your sins.
- A decision to follow Jesus.
- Yielding to the Holy Spirit.
- Turning away from sin.
- Transformation from within.



Are You Born Again?

If you are born again, you are a living testament of God's word and His promises.

If you are not born again, consider the following questions:

1. Do you desire more in your life?
2. Do you have a "void" deep within your being...and have realized nothing you have tried can fill it?
3. Is the present path you are living going in the wrong direction?

If you answer yes to one or more of the above questions...then make a decision to give your faith, trust and life to Jesus Christ—as your Savior and Lord—who offered His life as a means for the forgiveness of your sins.

Here are some interesting points to consider:

1. You cannot earn salvation and eternal life by being "good enough."
2. Obtaining salvation and eternal life is not based upon what we can do—but upon what Jesus did for us.
3. Jesus said, **"No one comes to the Father except through Me."** John 14:6

Salvation and eternal life are a free gift—fully paid for by the life and blood of Jesus Christ when He died on the cross. There is nothing else you can add...other than to thank Him for what He has done, give Him praise and glorify Him...for He alone is worthy. Take a moment and think about how it will be when we are on the other side and we are able to spiritually worship Him—with humble and thankful hearts—as we lift our praises to our Savior and Lord.

To reinforce this truth, consider the differences if it was possible to earn entry into Heaven based upon our behavior.

- If it was possible to earn entry into Heaven...would it negate (void) the crucified death of God's Son, Jesus?
- When the person who met the required "standards of behavior" enters into Heaven:
 - Would they think they are there because of what they did, or because what Jesus Christ did for them?
 - Who would they think should receive recognition for what was done?
 - Would there be a sense of entitlement?
 - "I have the right to be here because I met the required behavior."
 - "Here's my list of good deeds...and I want what's coming to me!"
 - "Wait...I know I was better than this other guy. Why did he get more rewards than me?"
 - Can you envision those who earned their way to Heaven proudly walking around with their "badges of honor"? (As opposed to those who are saved by grace will lay their crowns at the feet of Jesus.)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9) The above scenario and Ephesians 2:8-9 reveals:

- Why **"No flesh should glory in His presence."** 1 Corinthians 1:29
- Why we are saved by faith and God's grace...and not works (which facilitates pride and hardens the heart).
- There is nothing we can add to what Jesus has already done.
- The importance of knowing there is only one thing we can do to receive eternal life: we must put our complete faith upon what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

Every heart and soul who enters into Heaven will humbly and thankfully know they do not deserve to be where they are...and they will know they are there because of what Jesus Christ did for them on the cross...and they will know they are eternally forgiven for everything they had done...and the love for Him who saved them from eternal death will be overwhelming...and they will all weep in joyful praise as they worship their Savior and Lord.

Jesus declared, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Matthew 16:24-26

Take a good hard look at what's going on in the world today. It will only get worse as we approach the last days. As such, now is the time to let go of those things that are standing between you and God. Now is the time to open your heart and step forward in faith. Now is the time to believe God crucified His Son, Jesus Christ, as a punishment for our sins...so that we can be forgiven...and to restore our relationship with the Father.

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:16-17



Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us beyond anything we can imagine. Jesus, my Savior and Lord, thank you for dying for our sins. Holy Spirit, I ask that you speak to the heart of the person who is reading these words...open the eyes to truth...and save his/her soul from eternal death. In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

If you are ready to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord...all you need to do is pray...from your heart. It's about you, and God, and your relationship with Him. The following prayer is an example, but you may use whatever words you are comfortable with. Plus, pray as if you are speaking to Him...because you are!

Holy God, I am a sinner. Jesus, I believe you died and paid the price for who I am and what I have done. I want to trust and follow you as my Savior and Lord. Holy Spirit, I invite you to come into my heart and life and change me from within. Thank you, Jesus, for providing a way to restore my relationship with God. Amen.

Your next step is to begin reading the Bible. A born-again Christian will read the Bible from a completely different light as the Holy Spirit reveals God's truth from a spiritual perspective. It is also very important to find a church and interact with fellow believers who are foundationally focused on God's grace in Jesus Christ.

I often use Bible Gateway to read and research the Bible: <https://www.biblegateway.com/> Bible Gateway has different versions and in different languages. My personal preference (in English) is the New King James Version.

My favorite Bible teacher is Chuck Smith. Chuck left his physical body to be with the Lord in 2013. Fortunately, his Bible teachings from Genesis to Revelation (word-by-word, verse-by-verse) were recorded and may be heard on the following website: <https://calvarychapel.com/posts/c2000/> I suggest starting with the study of 1 John.

May God bless you with His joy, His peace and His wisdom as He transforms you from spiritual death into life eternal.
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