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Born Again & New Life

"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

Key verses: John 3:1-16; Romans 8:1-17; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Key personalities: Jesus, and the Disciples.

Timeline: The God of Eternity; He enters as a Man, being fully God and fully Man, walks this earth as our Lead, 28-29 A.D.

Jesus gives us life and then calls us to new life. He says *"you must be born from God anew; if not, you can't see the Kingdom for understanding spiritual things or encounters."* Just as a woman gives life to her baby, God gives life to His children so we are born of the Spirit. "Born Again" has become the key catchphrase of what it means to be a Christian. This is what our new life is, based on Jesus' teaching and work. This new life in Christ is that which turns our dead, useless life of sin into a faithful and deeply convicted life with and in relationship to God and those around us.

Key Happenings: Jesus calls us, be born from God anew!

Are you *"born again"*? It means conversion, being "born from above" or "rebirth". This means that God *converts* or "re-births" us; our old life is old and obsolete, useless-- even detrimental--and, it is no longer who we are. This also means "regeneration". Christ changes us by His act of sending the Holy Spirit to supernaturally renew us. We were dead in sin; now, because of Christ, we can have newness of life. This is paramount because we can't earn or achieve our salvation by any other means besides the work of Christ; without Grace, we cannot be forgiven or move forward in our spiritual life here or gain eternal life. We have been given a new life and a new nature, one that is in Christ (John 3:3-6; Rom. 3:9-20; 8:14; 1 Cor. 12:3; Gal. 4:6; 5:22-23; 1 Pet. 1: 3-12, 22-2:3; 4: 1-11).

- Being born again means we are born from above by God. It is the work of the Spirit because we cannot do it on our own.
- This term was also used by the Romans when someone adopted a child and that child's former identify, family, and status were relinquished and his or her new Roman citizenship took over.
- In Jesus' time, this phrase also referred to Gentiles who converted to Judaism; these converts would sever all ties to any former religion and ethnicity. Now, because of Him, the conversion means those who know Christ as the New Living Hope, inheritance, security, and God. Thus, the question implied is, what are we doing with it now? Our new life must produce results (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:17-20; Jer. 1:11-12; Micah 1:10-15; John 1:12-13; 19:11-13; Rom. 9:7-8; 2 Cor. 5:17-20; 2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Titus 3:5; James 1:17-18; 3:15-17).

Why do we need to be born again? Everyone is condemned because of sin; no one can ever escape it. Except Jesus, no one--none--since Adam and Eve has ever been born right; that is why we have to be *born-again*. All this is a result of Jesus Christ's sacrifice of redemption, His permanence, and His love for us. He lived, died, and rose again for you and me! This is the primary theme of being a real, saved Christian where Jesus Christ is one's Lord and Savior. We are born

again because God adopts and changes our nature as in *starting again as new* (Jer. 1:11-12; Ezek. 36:24-27; Micah 1:10-15; John 3; 7:37-39).

- Being born again is our eternal rebirth and beginning of our new spiritual and effectual lives. It is all about the work of God in us, His work that comes into our being. This does not and cannot come from us or be produced from our works or thinking. It is not about "me" or what I have done or can do. This new life solely rests on His Person and His Work, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ filling us. It is mysterious and undeserved. It is hard to explain to or be examined by a person who is saved and impossible to fathom to a person who does not know Christ. It is the depths of what it means to be a Christian as our lives are now with God and all about God.
- We are new, even though we may look the same on the outside. All is new in our soul on the inside. This is what gives us our new life, our purpose and reason for living and being. It is not just the entrance to the Christian life, it is the Christian life--our intimacy with Christ and dedication to His Sovereignty and Lordship. Our old nature has been swapped out, transfigured for Him. Our lives have been totally turned around from self-focused on Christ-focused, from carnal to the faithful, from prideful to loving, from self-interested to fruitful and obedient.
- We can't earn our favor with God, but we can run and live our lives for Him through His commands, nurture, and help. This is where not just our life comes from, but also our morality and ethics in decision-making and our righteousness for conformity to His will.
- We all need to ask ourselves, *Is there a hunger in me for more out of my relationship with Christ? If so, what do I need to do to get there? If not, what is holding me back?*

Our New Life means that Christ paves the way by building a new relationship, bearing the punishment of our sins on the cross, and covering us so we are pure in God's sight.

We may not be aware or be fully conscious of this new life; nevertheless, it is there. Our response is to yield to Christ as LORD out of our new life and obey Him. This does not come because of insistence or feeling, but of gratitude and faith. Thus, our character must reflect this new nature, and the leading of the Spirit, both publicly and privately. This applies in a higher sense in the spiritual union of believers with Christ. In Galatians, we see both the inward and outward means of this relationship, in faith (Gal. 3:26-28).

This wondrous magnitude of intervention gives us our place of Hope and endurance. We who are in Christ cannot be condemned either in punishment or judgment! Not only do we have our sins forgiven, but God saved us with a new life, not a new law.

Our new life in Christ removes us from darkness and the penalty of death into an intimate relationship with Him. This is not by birthright or ethnicity or by human will or works; rather, it is a gift of God, and we receive it and build on (John 3:3-8).

We are secured by who and what Christ did on our behalf. His life, death, resurrection, and His intercession is all for you and me because of what we cannot do on our own. Romans, Chapter 8 closes with a statement that cannot be matched in power and scope, how much He loves us: *"Nothing shall separate them from the love of God through Christ."*

Our New Life by the Spirit of Sonship is about *"Who will deliver me..."*. The answer is found in Romans, Chapter 8 from the Holy Spirit, who compels us to be more than conquerors. This gives us greater comfort and assurance, *"Those who are in Christ, and walk after the Spirit, are free from condemnation."* We have a conflict between the carnal mind and vanity, versus the spiritual mind and

holiness, and how we can distinguish them. We believers who have the Holy Spirit and turn from our fallen desires can be *adopted*. Thus, we are able to persevere through life, even suffering, by being "*heirs of God*."

- *No condemnation* means we no longer have to fear the penalty and wrath of Christ. We are not just saved from our sins; we are saved from God by God. He is pure and sinless and cannot intermingle with us in our sinful state. We no longer need to fear death, punishment or judgment as long as we are in Christ!
- *In Christ* means, "to be in Christ". This does not just mean in Paul's writings to be dependent on Christ, or merely to be His disciple, since Judas was His disciple! It implies a living union/relationship which Christ Himself first made known (John 14:19- 20).

We are saved and have hope beyond our comprehension, because we will be delivered. Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit is supporting our prayers, and thus rendering them acceptable to God! The great verse of comfort, "*All things work together for the good of those who love God, as called according to his purpose*," which tells us our great hope and a glimpse of how God works by predestination. We are secured by who and what Christ did on our behalf.

The great, incomprehensible gift of grace that we have received is free; but, this gift is no good if it is not being used and passed on.

Because of grace, we should be responding in gratitude. The quintessential way to please God, grow in faith, and handle difficulties is to live out our gratitude. The new will see a life improved by our character development. There should be nothing more important to us in our psychological and spiritual development than our pursuit to please Him (Matt. 6:33).

Pleasing God takes place in the crucible of our growth and understanding of our Lord and relating that *picture* through our lives to others. This is character in action. The outcome is that we become blessed people who are joyful because we are doing and partaking in what we are called and made for, as we should. The problems and trivialities of life are mere shadows to our real purpose and call. The picture of an authentic new life develops with a more beautiful and stronger image as it is passed amongst the world (Matt. 6:34; Rom 12).

Is my faith real? Am I born again? The answer to the question of whether our faith is real or pretend requires us to be discerning, to see if our heart is receiving His Word, and if we are only looking to ourselves. Is life all about "me," or is it all about Him? If it is all about "me," then there is a good chance your faith is a fake, or, at the least, needs a lot of work. If your motivation is all about Christ, there is a good chance you are a real, authentic disciple of our Lord, and are applying His Truths into your life (Matt. 7:21-29).

Key Takeaway: Do you realize the freedom and liberty you have in Christ? Do you realize the hope He gives you, because He delivered you? Our new life is perhaps one of the most liberating and encouraging themes in the Bible, telling us He gave us New Life! We have worth, satisfaction, enrichment, entitlement and purpose because of Christ. We have a reason to press on in life and service. We have no condemnation as His children. Because of this great comfort, why would we desire to live away from His presence?

When we keep our mind on Christ as LORD, we attain a magnitude of peace and a glimpse of His glory that helps empower and give us confidence in all situations. Since the Spirit of God is living in us, we must be on guard against our lust and evil desires so our mind is on Christ and not on our selfish desires. We cannot do this on our own; this is why we must also rely on the Holy Spirit to lead

us. Do we want the peace of Christ and to be His joint heirs, or do we want the turmoil and death of our sins by being His enemy?

The Call to the Church? We as a church are a part of the *Kingdom of God*. We are under God's rule; thus, Christ is our leadership and direction necessary to succeed in building a life, spirituality, and a church. We have His new life, we are born again; thus, we are then to exercise our God's "Lordship," and acknowledge Him as King. He is Sovereign; He is the absolute monarch of the universe. His rule is absolute. When we refuse to be governed and controlled, we will revert to our sinful nature in anarchy and chaos, causing harm to others and creating a church of dysfunction (Psalm 10:16--18; Dan. 2:44; 4:34; Isa. 9:6-7; Matt 3:1-12; 4:23; 24:14; 28:18-20; Col. 1:13; 28-29; Heb. 1:8-14; Rev. 5:9-10; 19:16).

Questions to Ponder

1. Before you were a Christian, how did you respond to the phrase being born again?
2. What does new life in Christ mean to you? What have you done with it?
3. In our new life, Jesus is directing us to look around and consider all the opportunities He has provided. What stops us? Is it our culture? Is it our fear? What about our past failures? Our expectations?
4. Can we see what Christ has for us, the wonders of His grace and new life?
5. Can we see His plan unfolding in front of us? Can we walk by faith, even when we are not sure where He is leading? Or, do we even see what is around us?
6. What is your barrier to a greater faith, is it so tall it blocks out the *Son*? Perhaps we are too busy running from what is ahead, taking the long road in a desert of despair and hopelessness. Our expectations must be in the reality and veracity of who Jesus Christ is, His perfection and activity, and what He came to do for us.
7. Do we want the peace of Christ to be His joint heirs or the turmoil and death of our sins by being His enemy?
8. Do you realize the freedom and liberty you have in Christ? Do you realize the hope He gives you, because He delivered you?
9. What do you think causes some Christians to stagnate into apathy, depression, or disillusionment? How can you guard yourself against this?
10. How has Jesus lifted you out of the darkness and despair of your life to a new life filled with wonder and hope? How can you share this with someone else?
11. What do you need to do to make sure that your faith is fueled on gratitude? What needs to happen for you to move from motivated by an expectation to a real, effectual faith?
12. How will your faith grow from being planted to growing and spreading more? What do you need to do? What is it going to take for you to do it? When will you do it? Do it now!