

Born Again—When? I

Fred R. Coulter—October 17, 2009

When is a person born again? That is the question. It seems as though doctrinal questions and doctrinal problems run in cycles. It's kind of like Solomon said, 'That which has been, will be, and that which is going to be has already taken place.' So I look at this question: What does it mean to be born again and when? and also: What does it mean to be born of God? has come about because a minister who heads up another Church of God, John Rittenbaugh, and the Church of Great God, has begun to vary from the true teachings of the Bible. Some people are beginning to believe in what he is teaching that when we are converted we are born again, which is not much different than the Protestant teachings.

We all know the principle which is this: *A little leaven leavens the whole lump*. So when things start coming apart or when a changing of doctrine by 'sleight of hand' comes in, even though it sounds very Biblical, and even though the Bible is used, you have to have a rightly-dividing the Word of God in order to come up with the Truth. So this is where we are in this situation. This is not an attack against John Rittenbaugh, but it is setting the record straight Scripturally.

Now what happens when someone comes up with a non-Scriptural definition of say like born again and they can make it look like its really Scriptural? What you do is this: let's come to Acts 17:10. What do you do with it? You say, 'Oh, that's wrong, we just reject it.' Or you say, 'Oh, that's interesting, that's new, we'll accept it.' What do you do? *You have to prove all things to see whether it's so or not*. So when these things come up, it gives you an opportunity to go through the Word of God again, and to really examine it to make sure that what the Bible says is really what the Bible says, and that our understanding of it is correct. Now if our understanding is not correct, what are we under obligation before God to do? *To correct it--is that not right? Yes*. So, we'll do exactly like the Bereans did.

Acts 17:10: "Then the brethren immediately sent away by night to Berea both Paul and Silas, who, when they arrived, went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, *for* they received the Word with all readiness of mind... [Willing to believe. We need to have that, so we don't need to reject out of hand what John Rittenbaugh has come up with, but we need to do exactly as it is here.] ...*and* examined the Scriptures daily *to see* if these things were so" (vs 10-11). That's what has to be the motivation behind it.

As well as he told the Thessalonians—I think it's interesting that in 1-Thessalonians 5:21, he says, 'Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.' It was the church at Thessalonica that didn't receive them in the way they should have, and they really didn't prove the things the way that they should have, but here in Berea that's what they did—they proved it. So this is what we are going to do. We are going to examine the premises on which these things have been given. If you want it, you can download from Church of Great God website, and you can get a printout of his four sermons. What you need to do is compare the Scriptures. You need to examine the proofs that are given and ask the question: *Is this really so?*

There are basically two Scriptures that he uses to say that we are born again now at conversion and the receipt of the Holy Spirit, when we have had our hearts circumcised by the circumcision of the Holy Spirit. So let's come to Titus 3 and let's see and we'll begin there. Let's examine this carefully and we will ask the question: what does it really mean? You also, in examining these things, have to also realize that when you use as a definition a proof-text coming from a Protestant, such as *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, [transcriber's correction] that they are trying to establish and prove that born again means that you are born again when you believe in Jesus. Here in Titus, the third chapter, is a place that looks like that may be true. So when you have something that looks like it may be true, how do you examine it? You compare all the Scriptures and put it together and you ask the proper questions as you as you go along. Now let's pick it up here,

Titus 3:4: "But when the graciousness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we practiced, but according to His mercy He saved us, through *the* washing of regeneration and the renewing of *the* Holy Spirit" (vs 4-5). Now the washing of regeneration obviously refers to baptism. The same word in the Greek is also used in Matt. 19—regeneration. So what we have here, we have something occurs when we receive the Holy Spirit—correct? *Yes!*

Verse 6: "Which He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior; so that, having been justified by His grace, we would become heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life" (vs 6-7). So that's a quick summary of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's ask the question: Before we have been baptized, what do we have to do? *We have to repent,*

and then we receive the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and this is what it's talking about here. What kind of mind do we have before repentance and receiving of the Holy Spirit? *We have a carnal mind*—right? 'Which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' We also have a mind which is 'desperately wicked and deceitful above all things.' Could you then say in this state that our minds, because of our behavior and sin, has degenerated? *Yes!* So being through the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, does this give you a born-again condition? So let's examine where 'regeneration' is used of the resurrection, and also as it is here according to being saved.

Let's come to Matthew 19 and see what Jesus said concerning the *regeneration*. And after the encounter with the rich man who didn't want to give up what Jesus told him to do, go sell all that he had. Matthew 19:24: "'And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through *the* eye of a needle than *for* a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.'.... [We also need to answer the question: When do we enter into the Kingdom of God, because that's also part of the equation, as we will see.] ...But after hearing this, the disciples were greatly astonished *and* said, 'Who then is able to be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said, 'With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.' Then Peter answered *and* said to Him, 'Behold, we have left everything and have followed You. What then shall be for us?' And Jesus said to them, 'Truly I say to you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit upon *the* throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life'" (vs 25-29).

Now let's examine this again. Let's compare this with Titus 3 and see what we have. When He talks about 'in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory,' this *regeneration* is obviously talking about being ***changed from flesh to spirit***. Was Jesus Christ regenerated from flesh to spirit at the resurrection? *Yes!* When did He sit in the throne of God? Well, He says in Rev. 3:21 that He sits in the throne of God right now, as well as being at the right hand of God.

Now also, it talks about those who will follow Him in the regeneration that 'they shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' That has to be when they are spirit beings in the Kingdom of God. Let's ask the question: Did the twelve apostles sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel at any time during their ministry?

The answer is, no. So here we have a *regeneration* referring to the resurrection, which then is the completion of salvation. We also have *regeneration and renewing* of the Holy Spirit, which begins the process of salvation.

So let's ask a question: What is salvation? This becomes very important before we can look into the technicalities of what it means to be *born again*. Let's come to Ephesians, the second chapter, and here we find that once we have repented of our sins and have been baptized by the washing of regeneration—now we will come to Rom. 6 in just a bit—but here in Eph. 2 we have concerning salvation, salvation by grace and what we are to do, and we will see that at no time in Eph. 2 did he say we were born again. So let's read it here.

Ephesians 2:1: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past... [Here they are in the flesh, carnal minded.] ...according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan the devil] the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience... [And that's why we have to have the washing of regeneration through baptism. And we might put in there, too, also, Eph. 5, that we have the 'washing of the water of the Word' which then converts the mind and we will see that when it's referring to *regeneration*, in Titus 3, that talks about the *beginning of conversion*. Our minds have to be changed. The carnal mind has to be circumcised with the Spirit of God. We have to receive the Spirit of God. We are saved from our sins, but that doesn't mean we're born again into the Kingdom of God.] ...Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*" (vs 1-3).

Now here is how God intervenes in our lives. There comes a time in your life when BAM! you can look back and see God began dealing with you. Verse 4, here's how Paul explains that: "But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us... [We're dead in sins and trespasses. Do we need to be revived from that? *Yes!* Do we need our carnal minds regenerated? *Yes!* And we will see that *regeneration*, after baptism, is the renewing of our minds.] (But here's the start of it): ...because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ... [We're not resurrected yet, though—are we? But we are alive together with Christ.] ...(For you have been saved by grace)... [From Satan the devil and your sins.] ...And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.... [That is a prophetic perfect tense, it hasn't yet happened, because v 7 clarifies it]: ...So

that in the ages that *are* coming He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (vs 4-7).

Now this parallels exactly what He told the disciples back there in Matthew 19. Is that not true? He said, ‘You follow me in the regeneration when the Son of Man comes in His kingdom and you’re going to sit on twelve thrones.’ Well, we have the same thing here, exactly. What our place will be spiritually in the Kingdom of God, we’re not told. Let’s see the operation from when God saves us from our sins and Satan the devil, what is to happen.

Verse 8, he repeats again: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God. Not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (vs 8-10).

Nowhere does it say we are born again. It says we are saved and the Greek there is *having been saved*. This is where the Protestants go off base and they say, ‘Once saved, always saved, by grace, no works, no commandment-keeping,’ and they always ignore v 10 that ‘we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus.’ God is creating in us through conversion—correct? *Yes*, just like repentance in Ps. 51, ‘Create in me, O God, a clean heart.’ Was he changed from flesh to spirit? *No, still in the flesh*, but ‘create in me a clean heart.’

Now let’s see the process of salvation. 1-Corinthians 15—here’s the process of salvation:

I. We have been saved from Satan the devil and our past sins

Does that end it? *No, that does not end it*. That is a beginning—correct? We’re going to see there’s a three step process to salvation. First one, saved from Satan the devil and our past sins. Now here’s the second part:

1-Corinthians 15:1: “Now I am declaring to you, brethren, the *same* gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, *and* in which you are now standing... [We’re standing in the grace, meaning we’re standing in the Gospel, meaning we’re standing under God’s protection and grace and mercy. That’s all according to the Gospel.] ...by which... [the teachings of the Gospel] ...**you are also saved**... [That’s the way it reads in the *King James*, but the way it reads from the original Greek is this:] ...by which you are also **being saved**... [Showing that salvation is a process.] ...**if**... [Now, it’s conditional] ...you are holding fast *the* words that I proclaimed to you; otherwise you have believed in vain” (vs 1-2).

So if we walk in the way of Christ, if we stand in the Gospel—and, of course, then other Scriptures, grow and overcome—that’s implied here by ‘holding fast the words that I proclaimed to you,’—you are **being saved**. That’s what’s happening to us now. Now let’s see where he started out 1-Corinthians 1 and he says the same thing:

1-Corinthians 1:18: “For to those who are perishing... [those in the world don’t understand the words of Christ nor about His crucifixion, and so forth.] ...the preaching of the cross is foolishness... [And it still is today—right? *Yes!*] ...but to us who **are being saved**... [Now he included himself in there—didn’t he? Did Paul also say in another place that he had to keep his body under control lest after he had taught others, he might be a castaway himself? *Yes!* So he includes himself in this.] ...but to us who are **being saved**, it is the power of God.”

II. Process of being saved: Again, it’s the process of being saved.

- living by every Word of God,
- standing in the Gospel,
- keeping the commandments of God in the Spirit,
- loving each other,
- loving God,
- having a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

—that’s all a part of being saved.

We’ll see the third part in just a minute, but let’s see what Peter preached in Acts 3 and we will have here then a definition of what it means—*the washing of the water of regeneration* (Titus 3). We already quoted Acts 2:38, ‘Repent and be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit.’

Now notice what he says here in Acts 3:19, which agrees with what Paul was teaching of *being saved*. “Therefore, repent and be converted...” That’s what the *regeneration* is—**to be converted**. And *converting* is a tremendous thing that we need to understand..

Let’s go back to Matthew 18:3. Here’s what that regeneration is to do. It is a *renewing*, it is a *changing of the mind*. That’s what **being saved** is all about. After they were arguing who’s going to be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, so Jesus brought a little child and said to them:

Matthew 18:3. “...Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, there is no way that you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” **Conversion!** He didn’t say *born again*. **Conversion is not being born again at the time you receive the Holy Spirit**. *Conversion is a process*. That’s what we’re talking about here.

Let's see what this process is to do. Let's come back here to Romans 6. This tells us what we are to do. I think it's interesting that the only one who uses the terms *born again* or *born of God* is the Apostle John. No one else uses them. We'll examine those here in just a little bit, but here in Rom. 6 he explains about the whole purpose of baptism. When you really study the Bible and you really believe the Word of God, you will see how far off the Protestants are in their lawless grace. They ignore Scriptures that are just like great, flashing neon signs. They say they believe in Jesus, but 'He came to do away with the law,' and Jesus said, 'Don't think I came to abolish the law or the prophets.' He didn't do it. Same way once you have the first step of *being saved* from Satan and your sins, through baptism, does that release us from anything to do with commandment-keeping?

I talked to a man who came up to me and said, 'Well, doesn't it mean that when we're released from the law of sin and death, we no more have any conscience of sin?' And I said, 'No, it doesn't mean that.' He says, 'Well, I don't have more consciousness of sin.' I said, 'Well, I'm happy to hear that, but that's not what the Bible teaches.' Baptism is a beginning. Everyone will agree that that is true. That's the first step of being saved.

That puts you in right standing with God (Rom. 3-5). So we come to Romans 6:1—Paul asked the question: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** We who died to sin... [And that's what baptism is all about—dying to sin.] ...how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?... [Yes, the old self dies. You have to be *regenerated* through the *washing of regeneration*, which is baptism.] ...Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way... [We're born again. *No, it doesn't say that.*] ...in the same way, **we also should walk in newness of life**" (vs 1-4). How do we do that? What is the result of that?—because that's going to answer the question of when is salvation completed.

Verse 5: "For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be in the likeness of His resurrection.... [Notice, it is ***shall be***. So that tells us that the regeneration of washing of the water in Titus 3 *has to do with baptism* and does not have to do with being born again, even though *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary* [transcriber's correction] may indicate that as one of the meanings of *regeneration*.] ...so also shall we be *in the likeness of His resurrection*." When will

that be? *Christ the Firstfruits, afterwards those that are Christ's at His coming.*

Now here's the process of being saved, or converted, v 6: "Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin **might be** destroyed... [Showing a process again: *Salvation* is a process. *Overcoming sin* is a process. *Developing righteousness* is a process.] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin; because the one who has died *to sin*... [through baptism] ...has been justified from sin.... [through the grace of God] ...Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him... [Pointing toward the resurrection. Nowhere here about *born again*, because you still have to fight the flesh.] ...Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. **In the same way also**, you... [have been born again. Doesn't say that—does it?] ...In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive [revived or regenerated] to God through Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 6-11). Then he explains the process of overcoming, and the process of overcoming is ***being saved***. We will look and see the whole goal of overcoming and being renewed with the Spirit, as it says there in Titus 3.

Verse 12: "Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof.... [So we still have to fight sin—don't we? *Yes!*] ...Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead... [Now that is ***as those***. If you're alive from the dead, you've been *regenerated*, you are dead in your sins. So he draws the analogy. Now what if you were literally dead in the flesh and you were brought back to life in the flesh? Are you born again? *No, you're regenerated back to life—correct? Yes!*] ...and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace.... [Now we'll see how this works.] ...What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? ***MAY IT NEVER BE!***" (vs 12-15). Then he goes on showing that who you yield yourself to obey, whether of sin unto death or unto God unto righteousness, that's the way that it is.

Now since we're here in Romans, let's come to Romans 12, and let's see what it means to be transformed and renewed. But this transformation is *conversion*. ***It is not born again***. That's the whole point of it.

Romans 12:1: "I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your

bodies a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service.... [Now v 2 defines the process of *being saved* and the process of *being converted* and the process of *regenerating a degenerate mind.*] ...Do not conform yourselves to this world... [Because we're to come out of the world—right? *Yes!* You can put in your margin there 1-John 2:15, 'Love not the world, neither the things in the world,' etc.] ...but ***be transformed.***... [It doesn't say born again. *Transformed*, that means changed.] ...***by the renewing of your mind.***... [Your mind has to be regenerated before you can follow Christ in the final regeneration, which is the resurrection.] ...the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God" (vs 1-2).

Now let's see how Paul defines this in another place. What is to happen, what is the ultimate goal to happen in conversion? Someone's going to say 'the fruits of the Spirit.' That's correct. How do you get the fruits of the Spirit? *By having your mind transformed and renewed.* Let's come here to Ephesians 4 and let's see the process as Paul wrote of it here. Now what I want you to see is the consistency of Scripture.

Ephesians 4:21: "If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to *the* truth in Jesus: That concerning your former conduct... [before baptism] ...you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind... [And *renewed does not mean* born again. We will see that absolutely conclusively proved by Jesus here in just a little bit.] ...and that you put on the new man, which according to God is created... [We are His creation. He's creating in us through converting our minds.] ...in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth" (vs 21-24).

Now where does this lead? What is ultimate goal of this? This is what Paul calls *the spiritual mind*. What is the spiritual mind? *It is the mind that has the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God*—and let's see where that leads. Let's come to Philippians 2 and here it tells us, just a few pages over. This is the goal of conversion. So when we have been with the *water of regeneration* and renewing of the Holy Spirit, this ***does not mean born*** again—because we will see that's an entirely different definition, and Paul never used the term born again. So here's the goal of the conversion that we are to have in Christ:

renewing of our mind
changing of our mind
we are His workmanship
we are being saved

—and this is how we are being saved:

Philippians 2:1: "Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, Fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind... [being renewed] ...having the same love... [which comes from God, the fruits of the Spirit of God] ...being joined together in soul... [That is that you feel a part of each other in a group of those converted Christians, that you know you are all believing the same thing. You are all working toward the same goal. You are all overcoming in the same way.] ...minding the one thing.... [What is the one thing we are to keep in mind? *Attaining unto salvation*—correct? *Yes!* *Attaining to the kingdom of God*—correct? *Yes!*] ...*Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others" (vs 1-4).

And what is this to lead to? Verse 5, ***here is the goal of conversion:*** "Let this mind be in you... [It's something that you have to yield to God to let it come into you. The same kind of thinking.] ...which was also in Christ Jesus..." This is the ultimate of conversion, right here. It begins with baptism, but our minds are to be renewed by the Holy Spirit. Our minds are to be regenerated from degeneration to righteousness. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus..."

Then it shows what He did. It shows how He thought. It shows what a wonderful, tremendous love that He has for us that He would do this: ***To empty Himself of His divinity and glory and power*** to become a human being, to rescue us and save us from Satan the devil and our sins.

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Let's continue here in Philippians 2:6, speaking of Christ Jesus: "Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, But emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant; And being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross.... [That's what Jesus did—in love, in service, in giving.] ...Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name which *is* above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord to *the* glory of God *the* Father" (vs 6-11).

Now notice, v 12 becomes important, which also shows the process of being converted.] ...So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in

my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.... [The process of overcoming, the process of renewing our mind.] ...For it is God Who works in you... [We are God's workmanship, inner working, *inner regeneration* and *renewing* of the mind.] ...God Who works in you both to will and to do according to *His* good pleasure" (vs 6-13). That is the process of conversion.

III. We shall be saved at the resurrection

Let's come to Romans 5 and we will see the third step in salvation, which has to be the resurrection. Then we will see how Jesus talks about what it means to be *born again* and how He defines it. Then we will ask various questions to see whether we are truly now born again as Jesus said, or whether that means at the resurrection.

Romans 5:6: "For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time Christ died for the ungodly.... [And we saw the kind of mind that that took, what He took upon Himself. So then Paul makes a comparison between what human beings might be able to do to show their love for someone else.] ...For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, **we shall be saved** from wrath through Him" (vs 6-9). That means *the resurrection*. So there are three parts to salvation:

- I. Having been saved from Satan and our sins.
- II. We are being saved, present tense, as long as we are standing in the gospel and obeying the gospel.
- III. We shall be saved, obviously, at the resurrection.

Let's ask the question. Since John is the one who wrote *born again*, let's find out what did Jesus actually mean. In the booklet that will accompany this sermon—*What Do You Mean Born Again and Born of God?*—I go through the particular details as to how that came to be understood and really it was a preaching and teaching of the early Catholic Church fathers.

So let's come to John 3 and as we go through here, let's then ask some questions and to see exactly what it means. John 3:1: "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, Nicodemus by name, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher *Who* has come from God... [Well, Nicodemus did believe and finally he came out publicly. But for awhile he wasn't willing to do so. Right here he came to Him by night lest he should be seen by

others. But they knew that He was sent from God.] ...because no one is able to do the miracles that You are doing unless God is with him.'.... [Notice, Jesus did not really answer the question, rather He told him the ultimate goal of why He was here.] ...Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless anyone is born again... [And that can mean *born anew*. What does this mean? Some people say *begotten again*, because it is the same Greek word. But there are times when it should be *begotten* and times when it should be *born*. How do you know which one is which? *By the context that we find it.*] ...Truly, truly I say to you, unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God'" (vs 1-3).

Question: if you are now *born again* because of baptism, have you seen the Kingdom of God? *No!* If you have seen it, pray tell—where is it? If you are born again, then the Kingdom of God has got to be here on earth and Christ has to be the King of that kingdom—is that not correct? "He cannot see the Kingdom of God." So this born again cannot be a baptism-experience or event. Let's read on.

"Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man who is old be born?.... [So at least he caught that process.] ...Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless anyone has been born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God'" (vs 4-5).

Question: If you have been born again, are you now in the Kingdom of God? Because the Catholic doctrine, they say we are now in the Kingdom of God if you belong to the Catholic Church and the pope is the one who's in charge of the Kingdom of God. That's why they say the kingdom of heaven means that when you die your soul goes to heaven. Now if the pope represents Jesus Christ, then Satan the devil will repent and can become converted—but that's an impossibility. 'He cannot enter the Kingdom of God.' If the Kingdom of God is not on the earth, how can you enter into it?

Hold your place here and come to Colossians 1. We will see you don't enter into it, but you are brought under its jurisdiction through the Holy Spirit and through Jesus Christ. You are brought *unto*, or transferred *unto*, the Kingdom of God *not into*. You can't see it; the Church is not the Kingdom of God.

Colossians 1:9: "For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthily of the Lord... [Which is what? *We are to walk in those good works.*] ...unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of

God; being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy... [Still not in the Kingdom of God, yet—right?] ...giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness... [Eph. 2, we have been saved from Satan and our sins.] ...and has transferred *us* unto the Kingdom of the Son of His love” (vs 9-13). We are not yet in the Kingdom of God.

So when we come back here to John, the third chapter, and it says very clearly that ‘unless you have been born of water and of Spirit, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God.’ What does it mean *born of water*? and What does it mean *born of Spirit*? A lot of people say, ‘Well, that’s baptism.’ *Not so.*

Here’s the answer and the definition in John 3:6—there’s the parallel, *born of water*, from v 5: “That which has been born of the flesh is flesh... [Have you been born of the flesh? *Yes!* Are you flesh? *Yes!* How were you born of water then? *Your human birth was not possible without the amniotic fluid or the water from your mother’s womb to push you out into the world.* You were born of water. What do they say when a woman is giving birth? They say, ‘Has the water broken?’—isn’t that correct? Where did you spend your first nine months of your existence? *In the amniotic fluid in your mother’s womb*, then you were born of that water, because Jesus defines *being born or water as being born of the flesh.*] ...That which has been born of the flesh **is** flesh...”

Now here’s the second part of being born of Spirit: “...and that which has been born of the Spirit **is** spirit” (v 6). So if you have been *born again*, you must no longer be a physical human being—correct? “**That which has been born of the Spirit is spirit.**” Are you spirit? How did Jesus behave after He was resurrected from the dead? He walked through the doors and the walls without it hurting Him or damaging the walls.

Verse 7: “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘It is necessary for you to be born again.’” In other words, you cannot see the Kingdom of God; you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God **unless you have been born again.** Where He says it’s necessary for you to be *born again*, that means it’s obligatory. You’re not going to see the Kingdom of God, you’re not going to enter into the Kingdom of God, you will have no part of it **unless you are born again.**

Let’s tie in another Scripture with this. If you are *born again* now, and if you are in the Kingdom of God, are you still flesh and blood,

though you have the Spirit of God? The answer is: *yes, you are!* What did Paul say? ‘Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.’ So that tells us again, if anyone has been born again they must be a spirit being. You cannot be flesh and blood. You must be born of the Spirit.

Verse 8: “The wind blows where it wills, and you hear its sound, but you do not know *the place* from which it comes and *the place* to which it goes; so *also* is everyone who has been **born of the Spirit.**” Question: if you consider yourself to be born again, are you invisible?—in spite of the movie, *The Invisible Man*. *No, you’re not!*

- Can you walk through walls? *No, you can’t!*
- Can you walk through doors? *No, you can’t!*
- Can you ascend into heaven? *No, you can’t!*

You cannot enter the Kingdom of God, unless you are born again. You cannot see the Kingdom of God unless you are *born again*. And if you are *born again*, then you are invisible and can move wherever you desire, no one seeing you, where you’re coming from or where you’re going. You are just like the wind. That’s what Jesus said. “...so also is everyone who has been born of the Spirit.”

Let’s look at three more verses and these three verses will show you the Truth concerning *born again*. Let’s come to Matthew 1:25. Always keep this in mind. **Keep these three Scriptures in mind.** Remember this: ‘that which has been born of the flesh **is** flesh.’ Now Rittenbaugh, in his sermon said, being firstborn has nothing to do with the birth, but it has to do with ‘pre-eminence.’ *That’s not true! That cannot be!* Let’s read it here. It’s talking about the birth of Christ in the flesh.

Matthew 1:25, speaking of Joseph: “But he did not have sexual relations with her... [That is Mary.] ...until after she had given birth to her son, **the firstborn...**” Does that refer to His birth? *Of course!* The firstborn. Jesus was born of the flesh—correct? ‘That which is born of the flesh **is** flesh.’ Was Jesus God manifested in the flesh? *Yes!*

Now let’s look at another Scripture here—Revelation 1:5. This absolutely proves that to be born again means--combined with what we’ve covered here in John 3—that no one is born again until the resurrection occurs. “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the **Firstborn from the dead...**” When was He born from the dead? *When He was resurrected.* So Jesus was born again. ‘Firstborn from the dead.’ Some Protestant is going to say, ‘Well, how could Jesus be born again. He never sinned.’ *That’s true, He never sinned.* Your thought of born again is that sinners need to be born

again through a conversion-experience. You've got it all muddled.

Was Jesus the One Who bore all the sins of the world? *Yes, indeed!* When was He born again? *At the resurrection, 'the Firstborn from the dead.'* Now we can look at some other Scriptures, but I will just say, these Scriptures prove beyond any shadow of doubt ***that you cannot be born again at the time you are baptized or receive the Holy Spirit.*** Because:

1. You do not become a spirit being
2. You do not enter into the Kingdom of God
3. You do not see the Kingdom of God

You then have a *regeneration* starting through the 'washing of the water of the Word' and *renewal* of the Holy Spirit to have your mind converted so that you can develop the mind of Christ. And ***you will not be born again until the resurrection.*** This is why in Hebrews 12 the Church is called the Church of the Firstborn; and this is why Jesus is called (Rom, 8), 'the Firstborn among many brethren.'

So don't be fooled by someone using the Bible to make it appear that you are born again when you are baptized and converted.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 17:10-11
- 2) Titus 3:4-7
- 3) Matthew 19:24-29
- 4) Ephesians 2:1-10
- 5) 1-Corinthians 15:1-2
- 6) 1-Corinthians 1:18
- 7) Acts 3:19
- 8) Matthew 18:3
- 9) Romans 6:1-15
- 10) Romans 12:1-2
- 11) Ephesians 4:21-24
- 12) Philippians 2:1-13
- 13) Romans 5:6-9
- 14) John 3:1-5
- 15) Colossians 1:9-13
- 16) John 3:6-8
- 17) Matthew 1:25
- 18) Revelation 1:5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1-Thessalonians 5:21
- Revelation 3:21
- Ephesians 5
- Psalm 51
- Romans 3-5
- 1-John 2:15
- Hebrews 12
- Romans 8

Also referenced:

- Booklet: *What Do You Mean Born Again and Born of God?* by Fred R. Coulter
- Book: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*

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