



## THE NEW BIRTH

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It a basic thing for a Christian; it is normally the first thing we are taught, because the new birth gives us access to eternal life with God in his Kingdom, for eternity.

Now, did you really understand what being born again means, what it implies in your life? What changes it brings about?

Many ask themselves this question but very few Christians have a clear understanding of their new birth.

Unlike physical birth, the new birth is spiritual, you cannot see it. You can see the effect, but the process of being born again cannot be seen, nor can it be measured in human terms. Therefore, how can you be sure that you are born again? How can you prove it?

Some Christians say, and even teach, that eternal life is not a permanent thing and that you can lose it depending on your behaviour.

We are going to try and answer all these questions with the help of the Bible.

It is an undeniable fact that all human beings must be born again to have eternal life.

The Bible says in **John 3:3** *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

It is equally true that there is only one way to be born again, and this is through Jesus Christ. When He died on the cross, he was the only man ever, who agreed to die having accomplished all that the law dictated by God. He never committed any sin according to God's eternal law. Since his death on the cross, anyone on the earth, by accepting his teaching, can inherit eternal life through Jesus Christ.

(For more details about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, see my study named The Person of Jesus Christ)

It is the totality of the teaching which Jesus Christ delivered that will enable me to be born again. When I have heard or read it and when I decide to put it into practice in my life, I will tell God and express it through repentance as I realise that I am a sinner and that without Him, I have no access to eternal life. As it says in **Romans 2:4** *“The goodness of God leads you to repentance”*.

**1 Peter 1:23** *says having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.*

The Word of God is of course Jesus Christ. Now it is clear that without Jesus Christ there cannot be a new birth. But then, how does it work? How can I know the exact moment when I am born again? How can I be sure?

Some will say that I'm born again when I stop sinning. This is why, according to such teaching, we are told to examine ourselves continually, so that when we realise we have sinned, we must repent straight away. Other teachings say that if I commit a serious sin (there is no such thing as serious sin in the Bible), such as adultery or theft, I can lose eternal life. How wrong! The Bible does not teach that. It puts people in a situation they cannot solve and consequently, in a position of constant failure, perpetual frustration.

Try to think back to the day when you gave your life to Christ. You did it because that day, you believed, understood and accepted that Jesus was the only one who could give you access to eternal life. Then at that precise moment, what did you do? I think that just like me, you told Him so in prayer. From that moment on, we committed ourselves to accept and to receive the very nature of God in us, even though we may not have been aware that God was doing this in us.

Some people think that when they commit themselves to receive the nature of God in them through the new birth, everything will change in an instant, or very quickly. That the next day, they will not be the same at all, that in a few days, they will become a better person. I think that all born again Christians, looking back on that day, will say that the next day after they were born again, nothing, or practically nothing had changed in them. The shy person was still shy. The born worrier was still worried. I remember that when I gave my life to Christ at the age of 22, at my home in Rochedale, Australia, I was proud of myself, almost presumptuous. And the next day, when I woke up, I still was.

Of course, I had been through a strong experience the day before, and I could feel a change was just beginning to take place in my life, but the next day, I still had all my problems and all my faults. And today, 24 years later, I still sin regularly.

So, don't wait until you no longer sin to be sure you are born again, because if this is the case, you will wait all your life.

The apostle James says in **James 4:7** *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

Who is always capable of doing the good he knows he should do? Well I think any honest person will say: whether I was born again 3 days, 3 years or 30 years ago, I sin regularly. And despite the fact that Jesus forgave all my sins, I realise I go on sinning almost constantly. Some will tell me that it is easy to talk about teachers who lead Christians into perpetual frustration because of their sins, but it is exactly what you are saying Franck.

Superficially it may be true, but if you look more closely... Jesus forgave all my sins on the cross, without any exceptions.

**Ephesians 1:7** *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*

But **James 4:17** proves that when I do not do the good I ought to do, I sin. These verses seem contradictory but we know that nothing is contradictory in the Word of God. So there must be an explanation.

The big question is: Am I forgiven for all my sins, or not?

Yes, of course, I am forgiven for all my sins, those which are past, those I commit today and those I will commit tomorrow.

There is no other explanation, brothers and sisters. When I realized this, my first reaction was: “No, you are wrong. It is impossible. It is too easy”. And if it was really the case, everybody would take advantage of it and would think: “All my sins are forgiven, I can do anything I like, God forgives me”.

Then I asked the Holy Spirit to guide me in this teaching by showing me other verses.

**Hebrews 10:15-18 says** – *But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them” then He adds: “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.*

The covenant God made with us rests on the condition of our new birth. If I consider I am born again, the above verses are for me, God applies them to my personal life. This is how we come to understand the true nature of our Father. The sacrifice of Jesus takes on enormous power, the manifestation of a love that is beyond our understanding. Then, you will ask, did God send Jesus as a sacrifice to pay all our sins, past, present, future?

Yes, indeed He did; this is the good news Jesus talks about. We are forgiven and we have eternal life once and for all, and for ever, whatever our actions (no matter what).

**1 John 3:5-6:** *And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.*

The apostle John tells us in this verse that whoever has Jesus in his life no longer sins. Yet, James tells us that if we don't do the good we ought to do, we sin against God. Is there a contradiction then? Of course not. The Bible never contradicts itself. This is how we see that Jesus, through his sacrifice, has forgiven our sins. Even if from a human point of view, I sin regularly, it is spiritually that my sins are forgiven. When I am born again, my love for him causes me to make every effort not to sin, but I must fully realise from those verses that I sin regularly. But Jesus has forgiven me in advance for all my sins. God considers that I no longer sin, even if, from a human point of view, I fully acknowledge the fact that I sin. (For more detail about sin see my study named "The Repentance").

**Romans 4:8** *blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.* "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him".

When Jesus died on the cross, from a spiritual point of view, all my sins were forgiven. Even if I sin, humanly speaking, God considers that I no longer sin. And this is why I can aspire to eternal life with God.

**1 John 2:2** *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

When Jesus died on the cross, you had not been born, neither had I, like billions of other Christians. Yet, it is not a problem to accept that over 2000 years ago, a man died, and through his sacrifice, forgave my sins.

Jesus actually died over 2000 years ago, for my sins and your sins, and yet we had not even been born, and had committed no sin. Jesus however forgave and paid the price in full for your sins and my sins in advance. In the same way, today, Jesus has forgiven the sins we have not yet committed.

I had some difficulties taking this in. For over 10 years I was taught in a church which pretended we had to repent whenever we realized we were sinning. That type of teaching provoked an attitude of fear mixed with frustration. Being conscious that I sinned constantly gave me a feeling of “starting all over again” every time, which consequently, blocked my spiritual growth in God. Today, I understand it is impossible to repent for all the sins I commit. I may sin and not realise that I am sinning. I don't know about you, but I do not always realise that I am not always doing the good I ought to do. And the Bible calls this sin.

You may think it is not too bad, not doing the good I ought to do, that it is a small thing and a sin which is not too serious in the eyes of God.

Make no mistake! The Bible says that whenever I commit a sin, however big or small, it is as though I was breaking the whole law of God.

***James 2:10*** For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

We begin to realise there are no half measures when it comes to sin, God either sees that I keep the whole law or none of it. Let me tell you, if you intend to keep the whole law in your personal life, you are deluding yourself. Only one man accomplished such a thing, Jesus Christ the son of God.

Therefore, stop trying to keep the whole law of God in your everyday life. You will never succeed.

***1 John 3:9*** Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

The apostle John says it again here in the above verse: “if I am born of God, I cannot sin.” And why does John say this?

***Hebrew 7:26-27*** For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own

*sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.*

The high priest mentioned here, is of course Jesus Christ. He offered his life once for all, and this once is when he forgives all there is to be forgiven in my life, my whole life, not only from the day of my physical birth up to my new birth in him, but for my whole life.

All my sins are forgiven.

Trying to find forgiveness for my sin again is like repeating Jesus' sacrifice all over again, every time I sin. He did it once and for all. And he will not do it again. Why? - Simply because it is not necessary. Hebrews 7:27 explains He did it once for all.

**Jude 1:3** also says (TOB) *"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints"*.

When I accepted that fact and applied it to my life, I experienced a huge liberation! The sacrifice of Jesus seemed even more powerful, more loving. I felt even smaller in front of him, and yet at the same time, more loved by him.

Then I thought: "this is wonderful, but I will not teach it to my children. They will take advantage of it".

Then the Holy Spirit showed me something, "All is written in my word, the Bible and God wished the Bible, His Word, to be within everyone's reach, known by everyone who wishes to read and understand it. So do not hide it from your children. If they take advantage of it, then, they are not really born again."

And so, one evening, during one of our family meetings, I taught this precise point. And like many others, their first reaction was to say: "But it's too easy".

However, when I taught about it further, deeper, it is not so easy. True enough, eternal life is given by Jesus Christ once for all, for all my sins past, present and future. The fact remains that, even if we do have that eternity, we shall not be equally positioned in heaven. The Bible shows there is a hierarchy in the house

of God. It also says that we will be rewarded according to our life on earth. We will talk about this further on.

And therein lies the balance of new birth. When I understand all the process of eternal life, if I try to take advantage of it, thinking. "Well, anyway, I'm forgiven for all my sins, even those of the future so I can get away with this". Then, if you are tempted to act that way, you must ask yourself this question: "Am I really born again?"

Let me tell you that those who might act that way as spiritual opportunists need to seriously make sure they are born again, for it is very likely they are not.

*Jesus said in **John 3:5** Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

For a long time I have thought like many Christians that this verse was about water baptism. But Jesus says here that we must be born of water, be born from a natural birth, from our physical mother. There are therefore two conditions to be born again. Being physically born out of our mother's womb to be a human. But also be born of spirit, have his spirit renewed by the word of God (born spiritually), then have our separated from our soul. (For more details see my study on the spirit, soul, and body).

Unfortunately, some people are born of water (baptism) but not of the spirit. Not to be mistaken with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (For more details, see my study about the Holy Spirit)

***1 Peter 1:23** having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*

When I am born again, it is an irreversible process. I can be sure that I have eternal life. The only person who could take that eternity from my life is me.

***Mark 3:29** but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"—*

Blaspheming against the Holy Spirit is denying God wilfully (for more details about the Holy Spirit, see my study about the Holy Spirit). In this passage of Mark



3, Jesus has just been accused by the scribes of being possessed, and casting out demons in the power of the devil, and not the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus tells them they blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, by attributing these miracles to Satan.

Those scribes knew the scriptures, and they knew Jesus was not coming in the name of Satan.

And they deliberately attributed those miracles to Satan. When I mentioned denying God, I don't mean someone who for a time, gives up their relationship with God because of a trial or a disagreement with other Christians or any other circumstances of their lives.

I mean a person who is born again, as Jesus said, born of water and of the Spirit, and while perfectly conscious of what he is doing, asks God to stop being his Father and wishes to give up eternal life in paradise. It is as though this person who knows God declared that Satan is the only one who can give him eternity. Needless to say it is very rare, and personally I have never heard of such thing. But it is important to realise that it is irreversible. It would be no use to repent and hope to recover an eternal salvation with God after blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.

This shows us that new birth is not like a yoyo. It is not a process I possess, then lose, and then recover after repenting. Once I am born again, it is an established and sure fact. You cannot lose your salvation, your eternity with God, it is impossible. If someone loses it, it is by consciously giving it back to God, and blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.

Apostle Peter tells us in one of his letters,

**2 Peter 1:2-8** *Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge*

*self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In this study about new birth, I have no intention of approving sin. Peter shows this very clearly in the above verses. Make no mistake. If we have acquired eternal life permanently through new birth, as I explained earlier, in a permanent way then it is equally necessary to understand clearly that when judgement comes, it will be done in two phases.

God offers us eternal life through Jesus Christ, through the new birth. Let us examine this parable of Jesus in

***Matt. 25:1-13.*** *“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”*

We, humans, are like those ten virgins. We are all heading toward the bridegroom who is Jesus Christ.

Why?

Because every moment of our life that passes by, draws us nearer to our physical death.

No one can say, "Stop, I refuse to go to the day of my physical death, I want to stop time".

No, time was created by God, and passes every minute. And if we will not live until the return of Jesus Christ, it is after our physical death that we will meet him. For those who are born again (born of water and of the Spirit) they will be like the 5 virgins with oil in their lamp, they will enter eternity, symbolized by the wedding bridegroom.

But the 5 virgins who were not wise enough to fill their lamp with oil, are the people who, refuse Jesus Christ's proposition of eternal life through the process of new birth.

This parable symbolizes the first judgement. This judgement determines those who are born again and those who are not.

Our judgment by God with regards to our eternal life through new birth is not the only standard which will have an influence on our life in the kingdom of God.

The importance of a holy life is now becoming obvious.

You may have thought, at the beginning of my study, that I did not mind the presence of sin in our lives. This not true. It is true that our new birth gives us access to eternity. As I said earlier, if I don't make any effort to live a holy life, in agreement with the Scriptures, some areas of my life are going to deteriorate or will not improve. It is clear that sin will prevent me from getting nearer to God and will block my spiritual growth and keep my knowledge from growing.

Letting myself go and making no effort to lead a holy life will not deprive me of eternal life, but will seriously affect my life both in the kingdom of God and on this earth.

Jesus himself says in:

***Matt. 5:19*** *Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

In paradise, some will be called “great” and others will be called “least”. There will be a sort of hierarchy. Our position in heaven will depend on our holiness here on earth.

***Matt. 18:4*** *therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

In Revelation we read that Jesus talks to the apostle John. After a long description of those who will be in the holy city, the kingdom of God, where there will be neither night nor day, for the glory of God will light it up entirely, Jesus says that each will receive, besides eternal life, a reward according to his actions.

***Revelations 22:12*** *Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”*

It is beneficial to us to live a life as holy as possible while we are on this earth. While being aware that in any case, we will never be entirely without sin, we must, as Peter says, make every effort to live a holy life.

But one of the signs of our new birth will be that we will no longer want to sin. Whenever I happen to sin, I will feel disappointed with myself, experience an enormous feeling of regret, but not an accusation. The accuser is the devil, not Jesus, not the Holy Spirit, nor God. Through this feeling of disappointment and immense regret, the Holy Spirit will convince me not to do it again.

If somebody else is involved, I will feel the need to ask for forgiveness. But when I stand in front of my Father, I will not act like David who said, “I stand away from you”.

That time is over.

Jesus has forgiven all our sins. Of course, I can feel the need to tell Jesus that I bitterly regret what I said or did, but I must not think :”Oh God, I have sinned, you don’t look at me anymore, you don’t listen to me anymore, you don’t love me as much as you did before.”

Let me tell you that when you were not born again, when you ignored God and perhaps even mocked him, God loved you all the same. He does not love you more today because you gave him your life and you are born again.

Sorry if I shock you, but this is true.

It is exactly like a parent with his children. When I think of my three children, I love them all equally, I would give my life for them if necessary. Sometimes, one of them may disobey, or badly disappoint me, but my love for them remains the same. Whether in agreement, or disagreement with me, I love them just as much.

I remember a few years ago, our older son, when he was an adolescent, did not really feel like following the rules in our home. And we both went through very serious moments of disagreement. But I remember that even when my son pushed me to the limits of my patience, I told him: ”If I am angry with you, it’s because I love you, if I don’t want you to do this or that, it’s because I love you”. Even when I was at my most angry with him, my love never changed.

So stop thinking that God’s love for you grows because you do such and such a thing or that his love diminishes because you don’t.

No.

God loves us all in the same way. Regardless of whether I sin or not, his love for me is just as intense.

In my own life, and the life of my family, this truth has changed everything. Today, if one of us happens to sin, he is hurt, disappointed with himself, or even angry for being stupid. But one thing remains unchanged. We should instead say, ”Yes Father, I have sinned but I know your love for me is still the same, just as strong. I know I am born again, and I am going to spend eternity with you, I know the sin I have committed is not going to deprive me of eternity with you”.

Knowing his love does not change causes me to please him more and more, and to sin less.

**James 2:8** *If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself "you do well;*

This verse is sometimes very difficult to apply as it sums up the whole law in itself. James is not the only one who wrote this. Jesus did too. So did the apostle Paul.

Applying this verse in my own life can be difficult, but when I fail to apply it, I don't feel over burdened by an unhealthy guilt.

I don't like sin, and I am often angry with myself for sinning, but knowing that my Father's love for me remains just as strong, gives me strength to stand up and start all over again.

My eternity with him is not lost or cancelled, on the contrary, I know that I am born again, saved for eternity, and this gives me courage and strength with the help of the Holy Spirit to go on fighting.

It is no good trying to reach goals that are too high for you. If you are sure you are born again, concentrate yourself on a life that is as holy as possible, by following Jesus teaching. Being born again is going to give you a constant desire to grow in Christ and gain more understanding. Don't try to apply God's law, you will not succeed. It is in vain. The law has not been written to allow us to reach a certain degree of holiness, but simply to prove that, as human beings, we will never be able to be holy as God, and that we need Christ for that.

Paul says in **Galatians 3:10**: "all who rely on observing the law are under a curse for it is written:" *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."*

Merely attempting to keep the law will put you in a position of sin, under “a curse” even, says Paul.

So follow your guide, the Holy Spirit, to help you day by day.

This constant desire for increased knowledge will not leave you.

The greater the progress you make in your knowledge of God the more you will want it.

Why?

Because knowledge will enable you to experience blessing. It will also enable you to realise that when the devil comes with his lies, you will be able to refute him by quoting the word of God. I don't mean learning verses by heart (although this in itself is not bad) but acquiring knowledge and being absolutely sure of what you are saying.

This is the real knowledge the Bible talks about. It is the conviction of what I say when I quote the Bible, much more than a text learnt by heart that I may not fully believe.

So next time you sin and don't worry there will be plenty of opportunities, let this thought be steadfast in your thoughts, “God still loves me, no matter what, no matter what I may have said or done, I am born again and no one (apart from myself, in my own free will) will ever be able to separate me from my Father.

Always remember what Paul said to the Romans.

***Romans 8:38-39*** *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,<sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

This study has been offer to you by "***The Real Good News***" Ministry.  
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LVBN / TRGN 2015.