

“God So Loved The World” Bible Study

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

Study #8: Why You Must Be Born Again

On one occasion, Nicodemus, one of the chief rulers of the Jewish religion, came to visit Jesus at night. Even though the Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah, this leader admitted, “we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him” (John 3:2).

In response to this admission Jesus replied: “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (verse 3). This response surprised Nicodemus since he had never heard of the new birth, even though he was a religious leader. So his reply was, “How can a man be born when he is old? Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born” (verse 4).

But Jesus was not referring to His physical birth, so He said, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (verses 5,6). In order to be a true Christian, every believer must experience the new birth. For without this experience Jesus said we can never make it to heaven. This study will therefore deal with what the Bible teaches about the new birth.

1. What must take place before we can see the kingdom of God?

John 3:3 _____

2. What two questions did Nicodemus ask which showed that he did not understand what Jesus was saying?

John 3:4 (i) _____

(ii) _____

3. What two births must a person experience to enter God’s kingdom?

John 3:5 (i) _____

(ii) _____

Note: Being born of water is the experience of baptism, which we covered in our last study. Being born of the Spirit refers to our spiritual birth. In baptism we participate by faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this experience the life of sin we were born with is surrendered to the cross of Christ and in exchange we receive the life of Christ. This is the new birth experience. It is not a re-birth of the old life. It is a new life in exchange for the old.

4. Is being born of the flesh the same thing as being born of the Spirit?

John 3:6 _____

Note: God told Adam and Eve that the moment they sinned they would surely die (see Genesis 2:17). We know that they did not die physically that same day, but they died spiritually. The Holy Spirit, Who was dwelling in them, left them and their lives were plunged into darkness. Because Adam could not pass on to us what he did not have, all his children were also born spiritually dead. This is our natural inheritance.

5. What two words used in this text mean the same thing?

John 1:12 (i) _____

(ii) _____

Note: The words “received” and “believed” are synonymous. To believe in Jesus Christ is not only a mental assent to truth, it is to receive Him, to make Him part of yourself.

6. Of whom are we born when we receive Jesus?

John 1:13 _____

7. Can we belong to Christ and not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us?

Romans 8:9 _____

8. What must we consider the body to be when Christ’s spirit is living in us?

Romans 8:10 _____

Note: Paul shows us that Christ dwelling in us is the same as the Spirit dwelling in us and the body is dead because we have surrendered it to the cross. By faith, our old life is gone and the new life must take over. This is the foundation of Christianity.

9. Name two of the privileges we receive when we experience the new birth.

Romans 8:15-17 (i) _____

(ii) _____

Note: An adopted child has all the legal rights of a natural child. If we have received Christ’s life we have received the life of the Son of God. Therefore, we also become the sons of God with all the privileges of natural children. Before we received this adoption — the new birth — we were under the bondage of fear, afraid of God. But now fear is gone because God is our beloved Father. “Abba, Father” means “Dear Father.”

10. What did God restore in saving us in Christ?

Titus 3:5 _____

Note: God saved us by giving us the Holy Spirit. The new birth is receiving the life of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in exchange for our life of sin. This is what regeneration is all about. Receiving the life of Christ is experienced by the renewing of the Spirit.

11. What does it mean to obey the truth?

1 Peter 1:22 _____

Note: When we obey the truth of the gospel we surrender to what Christ did to us on the cross. He cleansed us from sin. Not only from the guilt and punishment of sin but also the principle of sin, which is the love of self. In exchange, He gave us His life of love. This love must now manifest itself in our relationship with one another.

12. How does Peter describe the experience of the new birth?

1 Peter 1:23 _____

Note: If we have the new birth experience, we receive a life that will last forever because it is the eternal or everlasting life of Christ, the gift of God.

13. In exchange for our stony hearts of the flesh what does God give the one who is born of the Spirit?

Ezekiel 36:26 _____

Note: In the new birth experience, God takes away our stony heart of sin and replaces it with Christ's heart of love. This love is what makes it possible to keep the commandments of God.

14. What happens when God puts His Spirit in us?

Ezekiel 36:27 _____

15. When the Spirit of God lives in us, what do we become?

1 Corinthians 3:16 _____

Note: When God comes and dwells in us we become very special. Imagine! The God of the universe comes and dwells in us. Our bodies are His dwelling place. What a privilege!

16. When the Holy Spirit lives in us to whom do we belong?

1 Corinthians 6:19 _____

17. What two things does God want to do in us?

2 Corinthians 6:16 (i) _____

(ii) _____

Note: God wants to dwell in us so that He may give us the hope of salvation. God also wants to walk in us so that he can demonstrate to the world, through us, what He is like — a God of love. That is the privilege of being a Christian.

18. What two types of people does God seek to revive?

Isaiah 57:15 (i) _____

(ii) _____

Note: If you feel discouraged or downtrodden God says, “You are My child. Do not worry about your situation.” By dwelling in us He brings hope, peace, and security. God is dwelling in you and He wants to walk in you as well. The new birth is not an option; it is a fundamental requirement to be part of the body of Christ. While God has redeemed the human race in Christ, this gift of salvation has to be received.

19. The new birth is made possible because of two things Christ accomplished on the cross. What are they?

2 Timothy 1:8-10 (i) _____

(ii) _____

Note: The life of Adam we were born with is a condemned life that must die. Jesus did not come to change this death sentence but to fulfill it. This He did on the cross when our corporate human life died the wages of sin once and for all in Christ. In the resurrection God gave humanity the eternal life of His Son. This is His supreme gift to mankind.

20. What trustworthy or faithful saying must all Christians know?

2 Timothy 2:11 _____

21. What blessed and living hope does the new birth bring to the Christian?

1 Peter 1:3, 4 _____

22. When will this blessed hope be realized?

1 Peter 1:5 _____

Note: By “the last time” Peter means the second coming of Christ. The ultimate hope of the Christian is not in this world but in the world to come. Until then we are saved by faith, and faith is looking forward to something we do not have as yet.

23. How must this blessed hope affect us while we put up with the hardships of life in this world of sin?

1 Peter 1:6 _____

Note: Being a Christian does not exempt us from the trials and hardships of life. In fact, these may even worsen, since Christians are citizens of heaven living in enemy territory. To a large degree Satan still has control of this world and he is the enemy of God, whose children we are through the new birth experience.

24. Why does God allow Christians to go through some of these trials?

1 Peter 1:7 _____

Note: The purpose of these trials is to strengthen our faith so that it may endure unto the end, that is, until Christ comes to take us home. May your faith be strengthened as you prepare for the blessed hope of Christ's second coming.