

ARE YOU REALLY BORN AGAIN?

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By George Lujack

Many evangelical and fundamentalist Christians refer to themselves as ‘born again’ believers. The meaning of the phrase ‘born again,’ as spoken by Yeshua (Jesus), has been misunderstood by many resulting in some confusion. This article will analyze the verses, clear up the confusion, and reveal the mystery of what Yeshua (Jesus) really meant when He said that we must be ‘born again’ in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Many Christians believe that to be born again means undergoing a spiritual rebirth or a regeneration of the human spirit by the Holy Spirit. While experiencing a spiritual rebirth is a component of being ‘born again,’ Yeshua (Jesus) was speaking of something much greater.

JOHN 3:3-13 (NKJV):

Yeshua (Jesus) answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

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?”

Yeshua (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.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

Yeshua (Jesus) answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.”

When Yeshua (Jesus) explained to Nicodemus that a man must be born again, He was not speaking of being born again into a flesh and blood renewed faith existence. He was talking of being born again into a new incorruptible spirit body.

To be born flesh of water is to be born of amniotic fluid, which is nutrient-enhanced water, through the womb. When one is baptized in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and accepts Yeshua (Jesus) as Lord and Savior, he or she makes a declaration of faith (Matthew 28:19).

To be born of Spirit, many believe, is to have the Holy Spirit indwell within and renew our human spirit. While having our spirit 'renewed' is good, when Yeshua (Jesus) said that we must be "born of the Spirit," He meant something more than just having the Holy Spirit indwelling within us.

JOHN 3:5-6 (NKJV) (HSV†):

Yeshua (Jesus) answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water AND the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (†reign of Elohim). That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:50 (NKJV) (HSV†):

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (†reign of Elohim); neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

All human beings are flesh and blood beings who have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). All flesh is stained with the corruption of sin and therefore cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Having the Holy Spirit indwelling in us is necessary, but it does not actually mean that we have been 'born' of the Spirit. The most righteous Spirit-filled believers still possess flesh and blood bodies and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, even if they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

JOHN 3:7 (NKJV):

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

Yeshua (Jesus) told Nicodemus not to marvel about what it meant to be born again, as Nicodemus pondered how this could be. Many to this day have wondered what it means to be born again and have come up a little bit short.

JOHN 3:12-13 (NKJV):

"If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."

Yeshua (Jesus), when speaking of being "born again" of Spirit, was not speaking of an earthly thing, that is, He was not speaking of a believer who had the Holy Spirit indwelling within him or her on Earth. He was speaking of a heavenly thing, a heavenly rebirth. He explained to Nicodemus that all throughout history, no one had ascended to heaven, for all men are flesh and blood and flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of God.

REPENTANCE, BAPTISM, OBEYING TRUTH AS BORN AGAIN SEED

JOHN 3:5 (NKJV) (HSV†):

Yeshua (Jesus) answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of WATER and the SPIRIT, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (†reign of Elohim).”

There are two components of being born ‘again’: to be born again of WATER (through baptism and faith) and to be born again into a spirit body.

1 PETER 1:22-23 (NKJV):

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been BORN AGAIN, not of corruptible SEED but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

To be born of water also means to come to repentance, be baptized in water, to purify your soul through righteous living, and to obey the truth through the word of God contained in the Scriptures and be led by the Holy Spirit. Once born again of water through baptism, a believer has become a righteous SEED of God, awaiting the fullness of being born again of the Spirit.

BEING BORN OF GOD VS. BEING BORN AGAIN

1 JOHN 3:9 (NKJV):

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.

1 JOHN 4:7 (NKJV):

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is BORN OF GOD and knows God.

1 JOHN 5:4 (NKJV):

For whatever is BORN OF GOD overcomes the world.

1 JOHN 5:18 (NKJV):

We know that whoever is BORN OF GOD does not sin; but he who has been BORN OF GOD keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

THE MYSTERY OF BEING BORN AGAIN INTO A SPIRIT BODY

Being “born of God” does not mean being “born again.” When a person is initially born of God, he or she accepts Yeshua (Jesus) as Lord and Savior and obeys His commands. Believers who claim that they have been ‘born again’ are still flesh and blood beings and do not understand that they haven’t really been born again yet in a new spirit body.

MATTHEW 19:28 (NKJV):

So Yeshua (Jesus) said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in THE REGENERATION, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

ROMANS 8:21-23 (NKJV):

Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with BIRTH PANGS together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, EAGERLY WAITING FOR THE ADOPTION, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:42-44 (NKJV) [WITH INTERPRETATION]:

The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised A SPIRITUAL BODY. There is a natural body, AND THERE IS A SPIRITUAL BODY.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-53 (NKJV) [WITH INTERPRETATION]:

BEHOLD, I TELL YOU A MYSTERY: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed [BORN AGAIN] - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised [BORN AGAIN] incorruptible, and we shall be changed [BORN AGAIN]. For this corruptible [FLESH AND BLOOD BODY] must put on incorruption [A NEW SPIRIT BODY], and this mortal [FLESH AND BLOOD BODY] must put on immortality.

REVELATION 21:5 (NKJV):

Then He who sat on the throne said, **“BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.”**

Flesh and blood believers must be ‘born again’ into new bodies. Our corrupted, sin-stained flesh and blood bodies will be ‘redeemed,’ ‘regenerated,’ and ‘restored’ in a twinkling of an eye into new, incorruptible, sin-free spirit bodies and then we will be ‘adopted’ by God. It is when we are changed from flesh and blood persons to new, incorruptible, sin-free spirit beings that we will truly be born again.

JOHN 4:24 (NKJV):

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

God is comprised of spirit, not flesh and blood. As believers we should look forward to the redemption and transformation of our corrupted flesh and blood bodies, as children ready to be born again into new spirit-composed bodies and to be adopted sons and daughters of God (2 Corinthians 6:18).