

What does it Mean to be “Born Again”?

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

John 3:3

I hear pastors, every now and then, preach about being “Born Again”. That term doesn’t convey much meaning for me. I know that the technical term is regeneration but even the word regeneration cries out for explanation.

Unger says Regeneration is, “the spiritual change wrought in man by the Holy Spirit, by which he becomes possessor of a new life.” He goes on to say that Regeneration, “. . . is the change from the state of depravity, or spiritual death, to that of spiritual life.” I’m don’t think his definition helps much. It doesn’t explain what actually happens inside a person that makes that person different.

You will remember the twelve spies Moses sent into the promised land. The bible says that Joshua and Caleb had a different point-of-view than the other 10 spies.¹ They thought the land could be taken and the other ten spies thought the land could not be taken. Numbers 14:24 says Caleb had a “different spirit” than the other ten spies.

Calvanists would say Joshua and Caleb’s different “spirit” produced their different point-of-view. Or is it possible that their different point-of-view, concerning God’s help in taking the land, produced a different spirit?

Could it be that the Holy Spirit used their previous Godly training to convince the two that, with God’s support, Israel’s grasshopper army, could take the giants in the land? In contrast, the other ten spies did not believe that God would be involved. And, in judgement, they did not factor-in God’s support in taking the land. Therefore, they saw defeat, with only their own grasshopper army fighting giants. The difference is point-of-view about God working in their everyday life.

I suggest to you that to be born again is to gain a new point-of-view about life; a point-of-view different than what you previously had; a Godly point-of-view; a point-of-view different from the world. A point of view about the God of unlimited power, that will actually be involved in your life.² When the

bible says, “. . . old things have passed away, behold, new things have come.”³ Its not that life around you has changed; its that your own point-of-view *about Gods action* in your life has changed.

In John 3:3, when the Lord said to Nicodemus, unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, all Nicodemus could think of was obstetrics! He did not make the connection that Jesus, as God, was doing something new in his life, and the life of others in the world.

What was going on with Nick? He said in verse two, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Nick seemed to realize, at least intellectually, that Jesus was connected with God. But apparently, he didn’t have enough personal conviction to trust that Jesus, as God, was establishing a new kingdom. In other words, he didn’t believe enough to act upon his belief which is the definition of faith. Joshua and Caleb believed enough to act upon their belief. They were men of faith.

Is it possible that regeneration and being born again is another way of saying that one has enough old thought patterns changed such that a new point-of-view about life emerges? I believe so! The concepts taught on the surface of scripture is just the way faith happens. There is no Godly magic by which some people believe and some people don’t.

Calvinists believe in such magic. Looking at the sheet marked “Calvinism / Arminianism” demonstrates there is no magic but that Reconciliation is a work of both God and Man. Here is how it works.

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolish-

1. Numbers 13:30 - 31

2. Matt. 17: 20

3. II Cor. 5: 17

ness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.” (understood)⁴ Before a believer becomes a person of faith and born again, this person, and all people, start their life not knowing about the theory of God. I say “theory”, because when a natural man, a man not born again, initially hears about the concepts of God; that’s all it is, a theory. It is like a 15th century man hearing that the world is round for the very first time. Even if the man is open to the possibility, he does not know whether to believe it or not.

How then, does anyone come to believe and call upon the name of the Lord? “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”⁵ The writer asks the rhetorical question knowing the implication is that those elements are necessary to come to faith. “So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.”⁶

Men come to believe by allowing themselves to be open to the theory of God and Christ. And, the goodness of God, as revealed by the love of Christ, draws all men to Himself.⁷ Exposure, over time, to the Word of God gives man an alternative world view, in which, he might believe. Once he has a certain quantity of alternative theory, the Holy Spirit begins to bring about an exchange of lies for the truth.⁸ This is the process of renewing of the mind which transforms a person’s point-of-view.

In the course of learning line upon line, precept upon precept a time will come that a man will see his need to trust Jesus as Lord, boss, or manager of his life. When a man trusts God in faith for some issue, God will reveal Himself to the man by doing something which only God could do. This Godly action, seen by the man, feeds back to him the insight that God is real and working in his life.

When this trusting by faith and Godly action happens a few times, a man’s point-of-view changes from “believing” to “knowing.” For example.

A small child starts to touch a glowing burner on the stove. His mother stops him by telling him it’s “hot”. He “believes” mom and withdraws his hand. He doesn’t really know what hot means because all he has is mom’s word for it. Later, with mom’s back turned, he reaches out again and singes his fingers. He now has pain. He also has an appreciation for what “hot” means that he didn’t

have before. He will never again touch a hot burner because he has become a “knower” with respect to hot. He has a new point-of-view about hot. In the same way, when a man realizes that God will act in his life if only the man will trust God to act; this causes a change in point-of-view.

Over time, it is this paradigm shift in one’s point-of-view and resulting life change, I believe, is what is referred to as being “born again.”

This is the bottom line. Seek God’s point of view. Compare it with your present point of view. The contrast will reveal the truth. For more information, you can read my book, **Managed Cooperation Theology**, Norman E. Jones, Divinely Timed Publications, 2011, available at Amazon.com. You may also get it on my website for less \$: “www.soulsurvival.info”. For question answers Email: “soulsurvival@soulsurvival.info”.

4. I Cor. 2: 14

5. Romans 10: 14

6. Romans 10: 17

7. John 12: 32

8. Romans 12: 2 and John 16: 13