

Are You Really Saved??

What Does It Mean to Be Saved/Born Again?

It seems like today in America you ask someone if they are saved they automatically say “Yes”. But do we really know? Do we really know what it means to be born again? When a person gets saved, born again they ask Jesus Christ to come into their heart. Most people today have had some kind of exposure to church and the things of God. We hear people refer to God, we hear people say they believe in God, even pray to God. But have we really asked Jesus to come into our hearts. When you ask Jesus to come into your heart its more than a children's prayer you pray at your bedside, its more than a feel good feeling or “I know this is the right thing” or someone prodded you. When you ask Jesus to come into your heart you are telling Him you want Him to be the Lord of your life, you are telling Him you want Him to have complete control of you heart, soul, mind and body. When a person gets born again, whether they are eight years old or eighty years old, there is a dramatic change in their life.

Being born again is passing from old to new, from death to life, from sin to salvation. It matters not if you are ten or forty, if you are a “good person” or a drunk on the street, we are all sinners. We were born into this world with a sinful nature, our nature tendencies are sinful and all about self. The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23 *“all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”* That means that regardless of your age, your position in life, your position in society, your background, your good deeds, your good traits, you are a sinner. We are all sinners, from the lowliest to those in the height of society. When you come to the realization that you are *a sinner in need of a savior* you won't just pray some “lay me down to sleep prayer” you will fall on your knees and humble yourself before an awesome God. When you see your sin through the eyes of God, when you truly see your soul as one that is lost and without hope apart from the mercy of God you will see your great need of His love in your life and ask Him to come in and be Lord.

Getting born again is an instant experience, when you surrender your life into the hands of Christ and ask Him to forgive you of your sins. He immediately comes to you and forgives you and washes away all your sins. When Jesus washes your sins away you are free from them, you never have to return to them and their hold on your life again unless you choose to. When a man, woman, boy or girl is saved by the power of God they are CHANGED! God sent his only begotten Son to die on a cruel cross for mine and your sins, God didn't watch His own Son suffer and die in vain. When Christ paid such a high price it was so that you could be completely free from sin and never be the same person ever again. When a person gets truly born again his heart and mind are changed. He doesn't think the same way anymore, he doesn't feel the same way, he doesn't walk the same way, he doesn't talk the same way. His life has been supernaturally changed forever!! The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17(KJV) *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* What that is telling us is that when you get saved you are a new creature, old things pass away. Old things being your past life, your desires, your thoughts, your ambitions, your plans, your opinions, your way of doing things is changed. You don't desire the same things you used to, you don't think about the things you used to. Your entire being has been changed by the power of God through the blood of His Son Jesus. When that experience takes place in a man's life you will see a drastic change in his life. He will be a new creature, full of joy, gladness, and freedom from sin.

The Fruits of Salvation

After a person gives their heart to Jesus the Lord will allow them space to learn and grow in the ways of the Lord and His Word. Some people who already have a knowledge of God and the Bible may come into this growth quicker than others. But no matter if you know a lot or nothing at all about

God and His ways the Spirit of God, which you received when you got saved, will direct your steps. Even if you were raised in church like many are or have never been in any church consistently when you get born again everything starts fresh, a new beginning to all things. There is only one way, that's the way of the Bible. Many Pastors and so-called preachers have misconstrued the Word of God, many sit in church every week and are being deceived because of preachers who don't know God or His Word. When a person gets truly born again he will have a genuine desire to *know God*. He will desire to know more about this Man that just saved his lost soul. He won't go by what everyone else says or thinks, he'll get into his Bible and find out who God is and what God's plan is for his life. He will desire to learn all he can about God, to have a deeper continual understanding of who and what God is.

Another fruit you will see in man who is born again, whether he has just gotten saved or has been saved for some time, he will have a desire to please God. He will be so overwhelmed and thankful for the mercy and love of God that he will desire to give his life to serve this Man who lifted him out of his sin. He will have a love for the Lord. This love comes from seeing your sin and from seeing how hopelessly wretched and lost you are outside of Christ, when you see that God and only God can rescue you from yourself and you cry out to Him in repentance and He comes and saves your soul you are *forever* thankful and humbled. Why? Because we do not deserve the Love of God, we don't deserve his mercy on us, we deserve hell today! Even with all our good deeds and all our churchism we deserve hell! The Bible says in Isaiah 64:6 *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;"* that means even the good things about you are useless to God, they are as filthy rags. When you see that you can never be "good enough" to earn God's love and forgiveness and that there is nothing you can do to make up for your sins and then you cry out in desperation and God Almighty hears you cry and saves you when He didn't have to you will be so thankful and so grateful. You will fall head over heels in love with this Man because He knew you and saw you for what you were but still died for you so that you might be saved. Even while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" Romans 5:8. You will desire to honor and glorify the Lord for all that He's done for you.

Another fruit you will see is a hunger to be in church and hear God's Word preached. Today, we have churches on every street corner just about, but it is hard pressed to find a church where the Truth is being preached with passion and clarity. Many people say they're preachers and that they hear from God, but in the book of 1 Peter we are warned about false teachers, *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."* When you get born again it is vital that you find a church where the true Word of God is being preached by a man who lives what he preaches. A lot of the theology we hear preached today is a cheap grace, sold on the market place of religion. The Word of God has been melted down till it is a weak, powerless gospel. The real Word of God is the most powerful thing this world has ever heard. The Word of God chastens, challenges, convicts, and encourages the believer. If the gospel you're hearing isn't pricking your heart and challenging your life you are listening to a watered down form of gospel, a gospel that will not keep you holy and righteous before God. You may soothe your conscience but you will not grow and mature in the things of God. At best you will sit in church and never truly know the person of Christ and all that He is.

A man that's been born again wants to be where truth is preached, where he will not be able to relax and feel good about himself, but where he is stirred and provoked to move on with God. He will desire to know God through the hearing of the Word. He will have a desire to pray daily, read his Bible daily, and live his life according to what the Bible says. Anything less than that is not a born again Christian. When you've been experienced real salvation no one will have to push and prod you to be in church or pray or live a life that pleases God. No one will have to beg you to be where you're supposed to be or to obey God, you will be in the house of God every time the doors are open because you're hungry for God and hungry to go deeper with Him. A man that's just been born again or has been born

again for several years is not a dull, satisfied, or self-centered man. He is the most happiest man on the face of the earth. Yes he goes through hard and painful things at times, but inwardly he has a peace that God is in control and that *"God will work all things for good"* (Romans 8:28). A born again Christian is continually hungry for more of God, continually thirsty for the deeper things of God. He doesn't get satisfied sitting in a pew, hearing sermons, he is looking for God he is on a search to be all he can be for God.

Another fruit you will see in a Christian is a desire to be used of God. You will be so thankful for all that God has done for you that you will want to give back to Him in whatever way you can. The first way you can give back is to give God your heart. To daily surrender every area of your heart and life to this Man that died for you. Even beyond that you will desire to be used as an instrument in the hand of God. You will desire to tell others about what God has done in your life. You won't hide your light under a bush, you will let it shine for the whole world to see, *"Look what God has done for me!"*. You will want to know God's will and plan for your life so that you can fulfill it. You will desire to walk in that new found will so that you can be a light and a voice to the lost souls around you. You won't just take up a space on a pew you will take the gospel to the streets, to your neighbors, to your family, your friends, your co-workers, and anyone who will listen. You will want to lift Jesus up for the world to see. Jesus said in John 12:32, *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me."* If you don't see these fruits in your life then you have either never been born again or your salvation has become wrought and dry and you need to seek the Lord till He renews your Christianity. If you've never been born again these are some of the fruits you can expect and look for.

What If I've Been Baptized?

Some people believe that if you have been baptized you have been "saved". Water Baptism is a symbol of your salvation, a public declaration of what has taken place in your life whether you have gotten baptized shortly after you got born again or years later. Being baptized in water symbolizes the washing away of your sins. It doesn't not literally wash your sins away, only Jesus Christ can do that. Water baptism makes you no more saved than you were before. As we've said, salvation is giving your heart to the Lord. It is a surrender and yielding of the heart. A lot of people say they are saved because they got baptized in water or they got dedicated to the Lord when they were a child. If you have *never* asked Jesus to come into your heart and have made a total surrender of your life to Jesus and you are walking in that commitment you have *never* been born again. Getting baptized in water and being dedicated to the Lord are good things, but when the heart and life style are not following in that you have not been supernaturally changed by God. Being baptized in water comes after you get saved, you are letting everyone know that you have given your heart to Jesus and that you are living your life for him.

Saved or Deceived?

Many people today, especially in America, believe that they are saved. Most people you approach and ask them if they've ever been saved will say "yes". If half of the people who say they are saved were really saved, then we would be seeing the second Great Awakening taking place in our nation. But the majority of those that say they are saved are deceived. Being raised in church your whole life or going to church every week doesn't make you saved. Many sit in churches and "do" church but they have never had a true born again experience with the Lord. Many people believe that because they "believe" in God they are saved, not true. Many that work in the church or do good deeds in their community believe that their works makes them saved, again not true. In Ephesians 2:8-9 it says, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Its not what we have done "for God" that saves us, *"all our righteousnesses is as filthy rags,"* (Isaiah 64:6). But the Bible also tells us that *"So also faith, if it*

does not have works (deeds and actions of obedience to back it up), by itself is destitute of power (inoperative, dead)." (James 2:17 Amplified). The good things we do aren't necessarily bad things, but without faith in Christ, without the born again experience they are worthless and of no use to God. Your works must come out of your faith, not the other way around. *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."* (Titus 3:5) One of the greatest deceptions today are preachers who stand in pulpits and preach a watered down gospel that is not what God ordained Christianity to be. In days past when our country was still young and pure we had men of God such as John Wesley and Peter Cartwright who stood on the naked word of God, they didn't lower the Word of God to their level, these were men that lived and died and sacrificed for the gospel. Today we have humorous comedians in the pulpit, men who wear shorts and Hawaiian shirts in the pulpit. Men and women who preach eloquent sermons, who know a lot "about" God, but have never really had a true life-changing experience with God. They preach a user friendly, sleazy grace gospel where anything and everything is allowed in the church. That is not God's way! God is a God of order, discipline, purity, righteousness, and holiness. When a man is born again he stands on the Word of God, he doesn't compromise to sooth those in the pew. We need but lack preachers that will preach a gospel that cuts men and women to the heart, that puts a fear of God and His judgment in our hearts again. A carefree, laid back, worldly, carnal spirit abides in our churches today. We think because we show up at church and pay our tithes that we've done God a favor. If you have ever been born again going to church and paying your tithes is second nature, its just like breathing, you don't even have to think about it you just do it. Today we may or may not go to church, we may or we may not pray everyday, we fit God into our busy schedules. Christians are God-centered they are all about God and His Kingdom. Its not about my job, my family, my kids, my reputation, its about God.

A born again Christian is on fire for God, he has a burning passion in his heart for the Man Christ. He follows the laws of the Bible, he goes where God tells him to go, says what God tells him to say. Most today sit in church and appease their conscience by saying "we've come to church". But that is all we have done is gone to church. We haven't sacrificed anything for Christ, we have given nothing of ourselves to this Man that died for us. We give Him a hour of our time Sundays and we say we have done good. A saved man gives God his all. Why? Because God gave His all for us by giving His only Son. We have accepted this cheap, easy way of church and have substituted it for what Christianity really is. We have been deceived by preachers in pulpits and by our own minds into thinking and believing that we are Christians, that we are "good", that we're going to heaven. Only those that have lived for Christ on this earth will go to heaven. Only others who have given their entire lives over to the control of God will go when the rapture of God's true church takes place. In Revelations 3:17, *"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."* We who sit in churches every week, we who "do" all these things for Christ, but have no true understanding of what it is to be born again by the Spirit of God, to have a life-changing experience that never gets old. We have all the eloquent words, all the trappings of church, all the works, but we do not know the Man Christ. We have never given our whole hearts and lives to Him. We truly are wretched and blind, we are deceived!

I Know I've Been Born Again!!

When you have truly been born again you *know* it. No one can talk you out of it, no more can detour you from it. When a person gets saved a supernatural change takes place, no demon, no devil, no family member, no backslidden brother or preacher can change your mind. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Corinthians 5:17) If you know in your heart that you have been genuinely saved then no one can convince you otherwise. If you are one of these then Praise God!! All

of heaven rejoices to know that you have joined the body of Christ. We rejoice with you in knowing that you are apart of our family and that your name is written down in heaven. Whether you are newly saved or have been saved for some time one of the first priorities is to find a church to attend. A church where the Truth is being preached. In the day we live in finding a church where the true Word of God is preached without any mixture is a challenging task. But God always leads His sheep to green pastures. As a Christian you need a steady diet of the preached Word. Just as flowers need water and sunlight to nourish them and help them grow, a Christian needs the Word to help him grow in God. You need to find a church where the Word not only encourages you but **challenges** you. We do not need to sit in church and be comfortable, we need our lives provoked, we need our hearts searched and probed. If we get in a church that soothes our flesh and our sinful nature we will end up religious or backslidden. When you get saved the devil and your flesh are going to fight you tooth and nail. In 1 Peter 5:8 it says, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”* The enemy is not going to lay back and relax because you've gotten saved. He will come at you harder and stronger then he ever has. But the Bible always says, *“For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently.”* (1 Corinthians 10:13 Amplified Version) What a great God we serve that He will always make a way of escape for us. As a Christian you should have a desire to hear the Word, to pray daily, to read your Bible and understand what God is saying to you. Not just reading it for the sake of reading it, but truly comprehending what God is saying through His Word. Even though the Bible was wrote thousands of years ago it still speaks and sets free men. The tragedy of many young believers today is that they get into a church where the doctrine is mixed with a worldliness, humor in the pulpit, psychology and a little bit of this and that. But you must do whatever you have to do to hear the Truth. It may require drastic measures such as changing jobs, moving to a new city or state, or leaving the church you're in now. But growing in the Lord and progressing in your walk with God should be your first priority, no matter what is requires. We have had families out of state that can't find a church in their area, so they have turned their home into a church. Whenever our church here is praying they are praying, whenever we are having church they are having church. You must be determined in your walk with the Lord to let nothing detour you. When you gave your life to Christ you made an unconditional commitment to Him, just like in a marriage. The Bible often compares the body of Christ to a husband and wife. This is a life long commitment, whatever it takes to make it work, whatever the price, whatever has to change, whatever we have to do is the attitude we must take on when we become Christians. *There are no options!* When you get married you are committing your life to this man/woman, you are giving her/him your all. You don't get into the marriage and six months later when things aren't going well you want to get out. When you love someone you'll go to hell and back for them because you love them. That is how the Christian is to be with Christ. You don't have the option of quitting when the going gets tough, if you love Him you'll obey Him no matter what it costs you. Just as that husband falls more and more in love with his wife as time goes on, so the child of God falls more and more in fall with Christ. He desires to know Him more and more. When your heart and attitude is like this you'll find a place where you can hear from God and be challenged to move forward. You will want to know Him more, to experience Him in a deeper depth, you will be hungry for more of Him and thus you will find a place that feeds that hunger.

What's Next?

After you get saved what's next? Where do you go from here? Getting born again is the most wonderful thing you can ever experience in your life. The second most wonderful thing you can experience after getting born again is ***being filled with the Holy Ghost***. In today's society so many people believe they are filled with they "Holy Ghost" or "Holy Spirit". The Holy Ghost is the person of Christ in a form. It is a free gift from God *after* you get saved. Getting filled with the Holy Spirit is *not an option*. It is a command from God, "*Be filled with the Spirit.*" (Ephesians 5:18). The Holy Ghost is the power of God given to you to help you live this Christian life. The Bible calls the Holy Ghost a "comforter." "*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.*" (John 14:16) The Holy Spirit awakens your senses to God. The Holy Ghost allows you to see, feel, hear, touch and taste God. It will no longer be mere words on a page, you will sense the presence of God in your heart and in your day to day life. The Word of God will become alive, those words in that Bible will speak to you and jump up off the page at you. The Holy Ghost gives you a conscious awareness of who God is and that He is living inside you. He helps you walk and live sensitive to the Lord. When you are about to do something you shouldn't or you think something you shouldn't the Holy Ghost will "check" you. You will sense a convicting check telling you don't go here, don't do that, don't say that. The Holy Ghost teaches you how to walk upright before God, how to live a Christian life that's pleasing to God, how to pray, how to hear, receive and apply God's Word in your daily life.

Another thing the Holy Ghost is is a "Revealer of Christ". He reveals who Christ is to you, His characteristics, His personality. He allows you to experience Christ in a personal way, beyond a surface acquaintanceship. The Holy Ghost is sometimes compared with the servant that Abraham sent to find a wife for his son Isaac. Abraham sent his most trusted servant to pick out a wife for his son Isaac. The servant, inspired by God, choose Rebekah as the one for Isaac. The journey back to Isaac's camp was a long and rough one by camel back, it took several days to get there. After a couple days on the back of a camel Rebekah probably grew tired and started to feel the pain of the journey. But whenever she would feel like turning back the servant was telling Rebekah about her husband to be, about his character, about how rich he was and all the land he would inherit. After she heard all those things about Isaac she was ready to keep going another mile. The Holy Ghost is the same way, when this Christian life gets tough, and it will at times, the Holy Ghost will reveal Christ to you and remind you of who He is and how great He is. He will refresh you and renew that fire inside you. He will equipped you to continue on down the road in the mist of your hardships. The Holy Ghost gives you "tokens" along the journey to sustain you and give you strength and encouragement. When you hear the preached word the Holy Ghost will make those words more real and alive to you then you've ever experienced. When you worship the Lord the Holy Ghost will stir in your heart and remind you of all the times God has moved in your life. Being a Christian and not being filled with the Holy Ghost is like being a car with no gas in the tank. You're capable of doing great things for God, of experiencing His power and might but only to a certain degree. You will never receive the fullness of Christ or Spirit.

What does it mean to being *continually filled* with the Holy Spirit? Its a double meaning. We read in Acts about the disciples being filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost and in just a few chapters later we read that Peter and John were filled with the Spirit again. The Bible is plain about *many refillings*. In the course of our walk with the Lord we get dry at times, when we're going through trials and tribulations, or even from sitting in church week after week we are capable of becoming dry and wrought. When this happens the Bible says we can be *refilled* with the Spirit so that our Christianity is fresh and alive again.

Also when we witness, pray, and when we're used of God we are "giving out", "pouring out" the Spirit and the power in us. After awhile we need to be filled up with that power again. What a

amazing thing! We can give out the Spirit within us to those lost and in need around us, on our job, at our school, those in our family, and when we need to be refueled and refilled God said He would give us what we have need of! That way we never lack in anything as we walk with Christ. The Holy Ghost keeps Christ and Christianity alive in your heart, you never have to get familiar with the things of God, you never have to “get used” to God, you never have to be dry or lack in vigor or passion. The Holy Ghost keeps that fire burning bright in you. If you are saved and have never been filled with this awesome Holy Ghost and you realized and acknowledge that you are missing something, we encourage you to begin to *seek* the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Ask God for this free gift of power. You can get filled in church, in your home, in your car, or on the sidewalk. God isn't a respecter of persons or location, He looks at the heart and hears our cry. Again, the baptism of the Holy Ghost *is not* an option, or just for certain Christians, it is for everyone who calls themselves a born again child of God. If you have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost then we encourage you to keep it renewed and alive in your heart, don't allow yourself to become dry or wrought. Keep that fire alive and kindled in your heart. If you have questions or doubts about the Holy Ghost or you're not convinced that it is a requirement then we encourage you to simply pray and ask God, read the book of Acts and find out for yourself. The Holy Ghost is, without exception, an *absolute necessity*.