

Eternal life is not an extension of man's miserable, mortal life; eternal life is God's life embodied in Christ, given to all believers now as a guarantee that they will live forever. In eternal life there is no death, sickness, enemy, evil, or sin.

When we don't know Christ, we make choices as though this life were all we had. In reality, this life is just the introduction to eternity. Receive this new life *by faith* and begin to evaluate all that happens from an *eternal perspective*.

To believe is more than intellectual agreement that Jesus is God. It means to put our trust and confidence in Him that He alone can save us. It is to put Him in charge of our present plans and eternal destiny. Believing is both trusting His words as reliable and relying on Him for the power to change. If you have never trusted Him, let this promise of everlasting life be yours.

16. Why did God send His Son into the world? (3:17)

17. How does the person who lives by the truth respond to the light? (3:18)

Many people don't want their lives exposed to God's light because they are afraid of what it will reveal. They don't want to be changed. People often try to protect themselves from their fears by putting their trust in something they do or have: good works, skills and intelligence, money or possessions – even their self-help programs. But only God can save us from the one thing we really need to fear: eternal condemnation.

We trust in God by recognizing the insufficiency of our own efforts to find salvation, and by asking Him to do His work in us – the work of His Spirit.

JOHN 5:24 NIV – Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes

him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." ROMANS 8:1-2 NIV – "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

"Not guilty; let him go free!" What would these words mean to you if you were on death row? The fact is, the whole human race is on death row, justly condemned for repeatedly breaking God's holy Law. Without Jesus, we would have no hope at all.

But thank God! He has declared those who believe – those who have been "born again" – to be not guilty and has offered us freedom from the power of sin, and the power to do His will. Jesus washes the slate of our old lives clean – we begin new life in Him.

I CORINTHIANS 15:37 NIV – "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve."

ROMANS 10:9-10 NIV – "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

Doing God's Word

18. Are you "born again" of the Spirit of God?

If not, would you like to confess Jesus as your Savior, and have your sins forgiven, and have the gift of eternal life?

To receive Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, pray this simple prayer:

"Father in Heaven,
I believe you sent your son, Jesus, from heaven; I believe He died for my sins on the cross; I believe He was buried, and rose on the third day, and sits with You in heaven even now. Please forgive me of my sins and renew a right spirit in me. Jesus, please come into my life as my Lord and Savior. Thank you, Father. Amen."

You are now "born again" and have received the Holy Spirit and eternal life with God.

Jesus told this parable:

"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them.

Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost until he finds it?

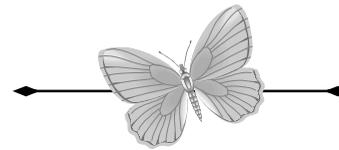
And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home.

Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says,

'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

I tell you that in the same way there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

LUKE 15:4-7 NIV

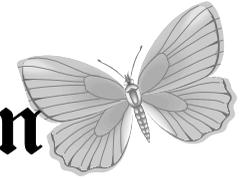


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"Ye Must Be Born Again!"



*"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned."
I Corinthians 2:14 NIV*

*"God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth."
John 4:24 NIV*

*Jesus said:
"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.
You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'"
John 3:6-7 NIV*

The Bible Says

John 3:1-21 NIV

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.

²He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, 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.”

³In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

⁴“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

⁵Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

⁷You should not be surprised at My saying, ‘You must be born again.’

⁸The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.

⁹“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?”

¹¹I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.

¹²I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?

¹³No one has ever gone into heaven except the One who came from heaven – the Son of Man.

¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,

¹⁵That everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.

¹⁶For 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.

¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world

to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.

¹⁸Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

¹⁹This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

²¹But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

Focusing on God’s Word

1. Have you ever felt like you wanted to start life all over again?
2. What is the best gift you have ever received?
3. Have you ever not accepted a gift given to you?

Studying God’s Word

4. To what group did Nicodemus belong? (3:1)

Most Pharisees were very jealous of Jesus because He undermined their authority and challenged their views. But Nicodemus was searching, and he believed Jesus had some answers. A learned teacher himself, he came to Jesus to be taught. No matter how intelligent and well educated you are, you must come to Jesus with an open mind and heart so He can teach you the truth about God.

5. What time did Nicodemus visit Jesus? (3:2)

Perhaps he was afraid of what his peers, the Pharisees, would say about his visit, so he came after dark. Like Nicodemus, we must examine Jesus for ourselves – others cannot do it for us.

6. Why did Nicodemus believe Jesus was from God? (3:2)

7. What is the qualification for seeing the Kingdom of God? (3:3)

This is a revolutionary concept: the Kingdom is personal, not national or ethnic, and its entrance requirements are repentance and spiritual rebirth.

8. What did Nicodemus think Jesus meant when He said that a person must be born again? (3:4)

9. What is required to enter the kingdom of God? (3:5-6)

“Of water and of the Spirit” could be referring to the contrast between physical birth (water) and spiritual birth (Spirit). The water may also represent the cleansing action of God’s Holy Spirit:

TITUS 3:5 NIV – “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

EZEKIEL 36:25-26 NIV – “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

Nicodemus would have been familiar with God’s promise in Ezekiel. Jesus is explaining the importance of a spiritual rebirth, saying we don’t enter the Kingdom by living a better life, but by being spiritually reborn.

ROMANS 6:9 NIV – “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”

10. How did Jesus compare the wind to the Spirit? (3:8)

We can’t see the wind, but we know it has power. Jesus explained that we can’t control the work of the Holy Spirit. He works in ways we cannot predict or understand. Just as you did not control

your physical birth, so you cannot control your spiritual birth. It is a gift from God through the Holy Spirit:

JOHN 6:63 NIV – “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I [Jesus] have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.”

11. Why should Nicodemus have understood what Jesus said? (3:10)

Knowledge is not salvation. You should know the Bible; but even more important, you should understand the God it reveals and the salvation He offers.

12. About what category of things did Jesus say He was talking? (3:12)

13. Who did Jesus say had gone to heaven? (3:13)

14. What is the result of believing in the Son of Man? (3:14-15, 18)

Our salvation happens when we look up to Jesus, believing He will save us. God has provided this way for us to be healed of sin’s deadly bite. The snake represents sin, and the pole the cross. Christ died for our sins so we could live.

15. How did God demonstrate His love for the world? For YOU? (3:16)

The Good News (Gospel) comes to a focus in this verse. God’s love is not static or self-centered – it reaches out and draws others in. Here God sets the pattern of true love, the basis for all love relationships – if you love someone dearly, you are willing to pay dearly for that person’s responsive love. God paid dearly with the life of His Son, the highest price He could pay. Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life He bought for us.