



# The New Birth

Are you a Christian? It is vitally important to know. Church membership is honorable, and doing good deeds is worthy of praise. But the soul-searching question still remains: Are you really a born-again Christian? Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

A born-again Christian is one who yields himself completely to Christ. This is necessary to inherit eternal life. When Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again, Nicodemus did not understand. Then Jesus used the illustration of the wind. Even though we don't fully comprehend how it blows or why, we know it blows, and we can see its effect. So it is when a person is born again. We cannot understand how it happens, but we see and feel the results.

Many people who claim to be Christians are ignorant of this new birth, while others try to receive it in their own way. It cannot be obtained by good works, joining a religious organization, or merely turning over a new leaf. It takes a repentant heart, a godly sorrow for the sins one has committed, and a turning away from all sin. Then by faith one must reach out to God for mercy and forgiveness, and claim His promise of pardon. One can know personally what it means to be born

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again. A prayer such as the publican prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," will bring the Lord's forgiveness. The Bible says the publican was justified (Luke 18:13,14).

Some may feel they have committed only little sins and do not need to be justified. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden, the entire human family became sinners by birth and need to repent. However, God provided the plan so that all can be saved. Jesus, God's Son, died in our place that we might have forgiveness for our sins through His Blood (Colossians 1:14).

Because of Christ's death, every person has the opportunity to be pardoned. No one is held under the bondage of sin and condemnation without a chance of

becoming a child of God. No one is serving Satan because he does not have the power of choice. Jesus shed His Blood that all might be redeemed.

The gap between the sinner and the Savior must be spanned by faith in God. Faith believes what God says. In Hebrews 11:6 we read, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Faith reaches out so a person can experience saving grace through the redeeming power of Christ.

The first step toward forgiveness is realizing the need for it. The Bible says that all have sinned. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:8,9). Many feel they are too weak to overcome sin. In their own power they are, but when one is born again, his life is changed. God gives him the power to have victory over sin. Then he can say like Paul the Apostle, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who

walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

When you repent and ask God to forgive you. His Spirit will witness with your spirit that you are a child of God (Romans 8:16). You will know that you have been pardoned. The peace, joy, and love of God will fill your heart, and you will feel a sacred fellowship with Him. As you keep living in the will of God, your life will be a testimony that you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many were defeated, the picture of despair, when they came to God. Some were hopelessly bound by crime, immorality, drugs, or alcohol. But God delivered them instantly. Even their countenance was changed when they repented with an honest heart. Others were so self-righteous, proud, moral, and kind that they didn't see their need for salvation. Yet when these self-righteous ones saw their need and repented, God made just as great a change in their lives.

While most people are saved in church, you can be saved anywhere. People have been saved in their homes, alone in the woods, or walking among the crowd. Others have knelt in a prison cell. God requires only an honest heart. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

Do not think you have strayed too far in sin to receive this salvation. Whatever your condition, Jesus is able and eager to save you. He says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). In place of the word "whosoever" you can write your own name.

If you desire to be saved, God will never turn you away. Jesus said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). All you need to do is meet the conditions God has laid down in His Word. Pray with an honest heart, "Lord, I am a sinner and I need forgiveness. Have mercy upon me and I will serve You the rest of my life." A sincere prayer like that will receive an answer. When you receive that born-again experience your name will be written in Heaven, and you will have the hope of eternal life.

Will you call upon God now? "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart" (Psalm 95:7.8). Invite Him into your heart and find pardon.

## **Apostolic Faith Church**

*International Headquarters*

6615 S.E. 52nd Avenue

Portland, Oregon 97206 U.S.A.

[www.apostolicfaith.org](http://www.apostolicfaith.org)