

LESSON 7

The Importance of Being Born Again *PART II*

GOD'S PLAN FOR GETTING TO HEAVEN

Who will be in heaven? Revelation 21:24 *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it (heaven).* We must be saved from our sins in order to go to heaven. **Judgment day is coming.** *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God* (Rom 14:12). **We won't be judged by man's standard.** *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things* (Rom 2:2). **What is truth?** (Jesus said) *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth* (John 17:17). The Bible is the source of truth. According to Jesus we will be judged out of the Bible (John 12:48). **Bible truth is all we're going to get.** Illus: When the rich man in hell asked for God to send someone to warn his brothers, the reply was, *They have Moses and the prophets (i.e., the Bible scriptures); let them hear them* (Luke 16:29).

STEPS TO BEING BORN AGAIN CONT.

A. Besides God's truth (Bible), we will also be judged according to God's standard

According to the 10 Commandments, we are covetous, liars, thieves, blasphemers, idolaters, and adulterers (see last lesson). James 2:10, *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* There are also other commands. Do you really love your neighbor as yourself? Do you put his needs before your own? Are you willing to meet his needs no matter what the cost? Do you devote more of your time to others than yourself? Are you ever selfish, angry, impatient, harsh, wasteful, proud, gossipy, stingy, insensitive, insincere, inappropriate, undependable, unforgiving, disloyal, etc?

B. We must realize we are serious sinners, and sin is serious

Romans 6:23, *The wages of sin is death (hell).* I Cor. 6:9-10, *The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God... they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God* (Gal 5:21).

C. Going to heaven is not automatic

Just because Jesus is the Savior of the world doesn't mean we're automatically saved. Most people have never been converted/saved/born again because they don't see how desperately they need to be. We are born spiritually dead, condemned and alienated from God, John 3:18, *He that believeth not is condemned already.* No one has "always been a Christian." Without being saved we will one day face the wrath of God. John 3:36 says, *He that believeth not the Son shall not see life (heaven); but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Romans 1:18 says, *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth (Bible) in unrighteousness.* (i.e- They take sin lightly while ignoring the Bible).

D. What do we need to be saved from?

Our sin! Remember from lesson one ... our sinful soul must be converted by the salvation taught in God's Word. *The law of the LORD (Bible) is perfect, converting the soul...*Ps 19:7.

E. 'Self Righteousness' sends more people to hell than anything

Illus: The Pharisee and tax collector of Lu 18:10. The Bible says in Romans 3:10, *There is none righteous, no, not one.* Isaiah 64:6 says, *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* In Luke 19:10 Jesus said, *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* Jesus is willing to save us, but we must see ourselves as lost. This is the **key!** Afterwards, salvation is simply a matter of faith in Christ and repentance from sin.

WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

A. Repentance is the "Twin Sister" of Faith

The Apostle Paul spoke of the 'gospel' he preached, *testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Act 20:21). In the Bible, Hebrews 6:1 mentions, 'Repentance from dead works (sin), and of faith toward God.'*

B. True repentance is 'what is missing' in many people who want to be *born again*

Jesus said; "*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*" (Luke 13:3). The apostle Peter said, "*The Lord is not...willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (II Peter 3:9). He added in Acts 3:10, "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*.

C. Repentance is desire to turn from wrong to right

II Kings 17:13, *Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes*. Paul said, *We preach unto you that ye should turn (repent) from these vanities unto the living God* (Acts 14:15). Jesus came, *'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me* (Acts 26:18). I Thes 1:9 says, *Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.* (An idol is anything that comes before God money, materialism, booze, illicit sex, false church or religion, etc). We must be willing to turn from it, in order to turn to God. God's grace will help you to do so. Often, there may be one main obstacle that comes to mind when getting saved. Are you willing to surrender it to God? Jesus said, *my sheep follow me* (Jn 10:27).

D. ‘Meta-noeo’ is the Greek word for repentance

It simply means a ‘*change of mind.*’ To ‘repent’ means to change your mind about your sin, and desire to submit to God by following His Word; the Bible. Repentance shows that we ‘mean business with God.’

E. People need to consider some of the following ‘roadblocks’ between them and God.

1. What people think

Some are fearful about ‘what people will think’ if they ‘get religious’ (saved). The Bible says, “*The fear of man bringeth a snare*” (Proverbs 29:25). In Revelation 21:5, the Bible adds, “*The fearful, and unbelieving ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.*”

2. Self-importance and pride

Simon the Sorcerer was ‘image oriented’ and prideful (Acts 8). Paul had to be willing to turn from his ‘works salvation’ and his false religion before getting saved. In Acts 9:6, Paul surrendered and said, “*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*”

3. Sexual immorality

Jesus addressed the sexual immorality of the ‘woman at the well’ in dealing with her need for salvation (John 4:18).

4. Alcohol

I Corinthians 6:10 says, “*Drunkards, ... shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*”

5. False religion

Nicodemus had to turn from his false religion to follow the Bible and Christ (John 3).

6. Family

Jesus said, “*A man’s foes shall be they of his own household*” (Matt 10:36). The healed blind man in John nine was willing to part ways from his family when he got saved.

7. Greed and materialism

Zacheus the tax collector was willing to turn from his greed and materialism to be born again.

8. Wrong living

The Philippian jailer was willing to repent and turn from his rough living. He showed his surrendered attitude when he said, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*” (Acts 16:30).

9. Self-righteousness and Covetousness

The self-righteous ‘Rich Young Ruler’ was not willing to surrender to Christ. He held on to his covetousness and walked away from salvation.

F. Those who weren’t willing to repent

Sadly, some are not willing to repent. Herod Agrippa wasn’t willing to commit his life to Christ. In Acts 26:28, *Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* Felix the Roman Governor wasn’t willing to repent of his sin. History tells us he was quite a scoundrel. In Acts 24:25, *As (Paul) reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.* Felix chose to hang on to his sinful lifestyle. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, *No man can serve two masters... Ye cannot serve God and mammon* (living for materialism, pleasure and sin).

G. Salvation is a surrender of the ownership of your life. It's a desire to follow God's direction

It means making God the priority of life. An old Christian hymn says, "*King of my life I crown Thee now.*" You submit to God by following His Word (Bible). Jesus said, "*My sheep hear my voice (His Word the Bible), and I know them, and they follow me*" (John 10:27). It's all about *obedience*. Jesus said in Luke 6:46, "*Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*" Jesus evened warned that, "*Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*" (Luke 14:27). That doesn't mean we will never sin again or 'take back the steering wheel' of our life, but when we do so we will be miserable (Hebrews 12:5-11).

H. True conversion to Christ requires a willingness to take a stand for Him

Salvation is simple, but it's not shallow. It will cost you something to follow Christ. It may be free, but it cost Christ his life. When you really mean business and want to be saved, you are deciding to walk the 'narrow road.' (Matthew 7:14).

I. Every person must carefully consider the commitment of being a disciple of Christ

Jesus said, *For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost?* (Luke 14:28, 33). Do you mean business with God? While salvation is free, it's not 'cheap'. Christ shed His blood for us and it will cost you something to follow Him. Will you take a stand for Christ without worrying about what others may say or think? Will you live for Him in spite of opposition from your friends & loved ones?

J. Salvation all boils down to submission to Jesus Christ

Are you willing to make Jesus Christ the Head of your life? Romans 10:13 says, *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Are you willing to turn from sin and submit to God by trusting Him and giving Him total control of your life? While you won't be perfect or sinless, you will desire to make God's Word the guide for your life? May God give you this wonderful desire to follow Him.

If so, you can simply pray unto the Lord in repentance and faith, and ask Him to save you from your sins. God has promised to hear you and answer your prayer. There are over 7500 promises in the Bible from God. God has kept every one of them. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is not a feeling, but simply a matter of taking God at His promises. Titus 1:2 says, *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.* If you mean business with God, and you're ready to give him your life, you can pray the following prayer from the heart and God will save you. Jesus promises, *him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out* (John 6:37). Remember, God keeps His promises. He said in Romans 10:13, *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* God has promised to save you and He keeps His promises.

- *“Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I’m a condemned sinner unable to save myself, but I’m willing to turn from my sins and make Jesus my Lord, Savior and Master. I want to be born again. I now trust in Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross to pay for my sins. Please forgive me and save me. Thank you ... amen.”*

If you have made Jesus Christ the Lord of your life, and been born again spiritually, we rejoice with you. God has given you a salvation that you can never lose! John 10:27-28 says, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*