

# Howards Corner

## Why you must be born again.

You may have heard the saying “He is a born-again Christian”. Then what is said is a double positive statement. It is like using a double negative statement because you cannot be a Christian without being born again.

In the bible in John 3:3 and in 3:7 you will find Jesus saying to Nicodemus that you must be born again (born from above) to see and be a part of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said to Nicodemus “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again”. Then Jesus said again in verse 5 “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of the water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh but the spirit gives birth to the spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying ‘You must be born again.’

### Natural man and the enemy

#### Man in the Garden

So, Jesus is saying that if you are born of water which He clarifies is being born of the flesh then you are born in this human body and do not have spiritual life. But operate in the natural realm with human reasoning and with human motivations. This nature we have is inherited from our fathers and ancestors.

So, this nature we have has been inherited from the generations of mankind and the origin of nature we have inherited come from the first man called Adam. This man Adam was created in the image of God but as we find in the Book of Genesis that though he was created in the image of God he did not hold on to that precious gift but succumbed to another voice.

#### Satin’s works

That voice came from one who from the beginning was in favor with God and held a high position in heaven, but pride was found in him, and he rebelled against God and became a liar and deceiver for there was no truth found in him. Therefore, he came to Adam and Eve with deception and lies to destroy what God had created and sought to corrupt God’s creation. That one is Satan who takes on many forms to deceive. In the Garden of Eden, he took on the form of a snake but in today’s world he will take on whatever form he chooses to deceive anything that is of God.

Believe me he is still at work in the church of today. He deceived Adam and Eve and he tried to destroy Jesus at His coming the first time and if you are in Christ then he will try to destroy you. Beware of those who appear to be of God but are instead from Satan. He does not come at you with a direct attack but with half truths and deception to make lies to look like truth and truth to look like lies. He may come at you with priestly robes and with religious rituals or misinterpretations of scripture being taught and not by the truth of God's word. He also may come at you with the lure of luxuries or pleasures or money or pride in ourselves. He has many ploys and can make it appear righteous. So, I say to you, make sure that you understand the word (Bible) correctly for there are many misinterpretations being taught by many preachers and teachers that are popular today and do not forget all that is called Christian is not always true Christianity. You must operate in the spirit to understand properly and know you do have a cunning enemy.

### **Back to man in the Garden**

Man in the Garden listened to Satan and though they had only one law they did not believe God and succumbed to the temptation to disobey God and ate of the forbidden fruit. Through this act of not believing God and disobeying they received the results of this action. Their spiritual eyes were closed and corrupted. They began to live life with the natural body of mind and soul but not with spiritual understanding. They became spiritually dead!

Therefore, their spiritual deadness was passed on to all men from that point on and has passed to us today. We in the natural body are without spiritual eyes and depend on our natural wisdom and knowledge to live out our lives.

Man was separated from God by this unbelief, and we have been trying to reestablish this connection to God because inside of us is some knowledge that there is a power and authority greater than ourselves and therefore are constantly trying to reach God by our efforts. This has brought about many religions of the world. All these are trying to fix a broken bridge between God and ourselves but without a spiritual language we cannot communicate with God and have come up with our own ways to communicate with God and connect the bridge. You will see, if you look, that almost every clan and tribe of the earth have some religious system or belief. Even the American Indians who were isolated from the nations of the world held to a belief in the spirit world and had a belief in life after death.

All these religions come up short of reaching God and have substituted or own works of some kind to please God. We think if we do enough good things or

sacrifices or follow certain rituals or follow laws and rules, we will please Him. But all these hundred and thousands of human developed religions have come up short because we do not have spiritual understanding in our hearts. The problem is that we have a corrupted spirit and cannot understand what God is saying to us. Even when as Christians we read the Bible, we do not interpret the word in the spirit. We are prone to read with the human mind and try to make it fit our idea of righteousness and are constantly trying to take things out of the Bible because it does not fit our understanding of what is right.

Some in the church have sought to bring about righteousness by human works. This thinking is trusting in our abilities to fix the world but if you look closely, you will see we are in a losing battle. The spirit of "Critical Thinking" has taken over and man thinks we can make this world a utopia and cure all the results of the sin nature. But the sin nature is with us still and we do not have a solution for that. We have a sin of pride that says, "We can fix that" and leave out God from our solutions. So, I submit to you that man is bankrupt in himself and has no solution to reach God and do away with the ills of this world and even the sins in our own life. Therefore, I say we must have spiritual ears and eyes to see God's great plan for our redemption from our fall in the Garden.

### **God's plan**

Even in the Garden God understood man could not save himself from this sin nature therefore He spoke a prophecy in Genesis 3:15 that prophesied the Seed from the woman would bring about our salvation. Satan would try to destroy the Seed and has tried ever since to destroy all that would lead to the Seed and would bruise Him on the heel but that He (The Seed) would crush his head.

Then the Seed did come. His name is Jesus (anointed one) in the English. He was prophesied many ways in the Old Testament to let the nation of Israel know He was coming. The Old Testament believers did not get to see Jesus or the works He performed or the words he spoke, or the miracles He performed but it was necessary for them to believe in faith alone for their righteousness. They only had prophetic writings to see this Messiah (anointed one) in their hearts and did believe by faith.

The nation of Israel to whom Jesus came had been led by God through many trials and obstacles to many years in Egypt and by God had been led out of captivity and led by Moses to the promised land which was the land that God had promised to Abraham many years before to be their promised land. They however did not follow Moses with a glad heart of deliverance but protested the whole way. They

were not following with expectant promise and faith but grumbled and were operating in the natural rebellious state of man. All of this did not go away even after they were led into the promised land. They even complained that they wanted a king over them like all the other nations. God yielded to them although He wanted to be their king and gave them what they wanted. This did not turn out well and then later God gave them David as king. Through all of this they were a stubborn and obstinate people and full of rebellion. Full of mans nature and not yielding to even God's blessings he had in store for them.

Through this journey from Egypt God decided to give them a law through Moses to achieve their right behavior. This law however did not achieve righteousness but instead showed Israel how guilty they were for the law is to show guilt so that we may seek God for mercy and salvation. They tried to keep the law through many generations but always fell back into rebellion and denied God but tried to reach God by keeping these laws although they could not keep the laws. The Law did not heal the heart of the human sin nature.

This then is the nation of Israel that Jesus came to. They were expecting a Messiah that would deliver them from the Roman occupiers of Israel and to lead them into the golden age of the Jews. Jesus came preaching a gospel message of love your neighbor as yourself and pray for those who purposely persecute you and pray for your enemy. He healed on the sabbath and was accused of breaking the law and He was humble in spirit. His message was to the poor and outcast of Israel and not to those that thought they were righteous in their own works. His message was to the ones that knew they were not righteous but sought a deliverance from their sins.

The "church" of that day was the law of the temple which should have been the law of Moses but instead was twisted by an oral code handed down by the Rabbis over many centuries which was not the law but was built on traditions and not the written word. It is known as the Mishnah. This is the law of the Pharisees and they lived by the letter of what they called the law. These Pharisees kept the law strictly, that is the Mishnah, to the letter of the law. They however did not live by the spirit of the law. So, they were focused on keeping the letter and not the spirit of the law. They became Jesus' enemy, but Jesus tried to reach them through the many miracles and His teachings which He had done but their focus was keeping the law and not on the message Jesus delivered.

Jesus had come to offer Israel the kingdom of God, but they refused to receive it but instead they plotted against Him and crucified Him. The Jews were blinded to

spiritual truth, and it led to the temple and Jerusalem being destroyed and the people being sent into captivity in 70 A D.

This crucifixion was Satan's striking of Jesus' heel. But the grave could not hold Him, and He was resurrected from the dead on the third day therefore it was not a fatal blow. Jesus will however crush Satan's head at His second coming.

## **Our Response**

The message of the New Testament is that we are saved by grace through faith and not by our works of keeping the law. This requires us to lay aside our trust in ourselves to keep laws and rituals but surrendering completely to Jesus' work on the cross for our salvation. The Jews could not keep the law, and neither can we, but Christians were never under the law from the beginning but were always under grace.

Only when we lay aside all other things for our salvation except Jesus's work on the cross, can we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts. It is by faith only that we can be saved. It is not keeping the ten commandments, it is not church membership, it is not by our good behavior or our feeding the hungry or our charity work and not by our church attendance. It is not the church or preachers that save but it is Jesus alone. We must surrender our trust in ourselves.

Therefore, if we surrender ourselves to Christ, He will be just to forgive us of our sins and fill us with the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes to abide in us, we are then "born again". The Holy Spirit will then lead us to all righteousness. For in Jesus, we are righteous because He is righteous, and He has imputed to us His righteousness.

Now you are in Christ Jesus and are a part of the kingdom of God. You have been set free from the law of sin and death and if Jesus sets you free you are free indeed. Those then who are born of the spirit will give birth to the spirit and can see and speak spiritual things.

Now you can see why we must be born again because we as natural men have a corrupted spirit and cannot see spiritual things and therefore cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we have a new spirit of righteousness supplied by the Holy Spirit.

If you have not been born again then I pray that the lord leads you to humble yourselves and diligently seek Him today. May the Holy Spirit touch your heart today!

**Howard**

