
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **When a Christian sins, what must he do to become saved again? Must he be "born again" as when he first became a Christian?**

First, the Bible speaks about being "born again."

John 3:5

⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

According to this, there is one birth, but it is comprised of two parts: (1) Water and (2) Spirit. Without these two elements one cannot enter into God's kingdom and be saved.

Let us ask then, "What is the water a reference to?" And remember that without this water, one cannot enter into the kingdom of God. No one can be "born again" without water being involved. The Bible explains exactly what this *water* is:

Acts 2:38

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 22:16

¹⁶ 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

Acts 8:35-39

³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

³⁶ Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"

³⁷ Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

These passages are plainly teaching that baptism in water for the remission of sins is mandatory and essential for one to be "born again." If a person has not been baptized correctly, he is not a Christian no matter how devout he may seem. Jesus said no one can enter God's kingdom without being "born again" of *water* and that means baptism.

But the next question we should ask is this, "What did Jesus mean by being born of the Spirit?" This refers to the Holy Spirit and to be born of the Holy Spirit, one must accept the inspired *written word* of the Holy Spirit and allow that word to govern and dictate his life from this point forward.

1 Peter 1:23

²³ having been **born again**, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the **word of God** which lives and abides forever,

In other words, the new birth consists of being baptized in water and accepting the Spirit inspired word as a guide in all actions of life. This fits exactly with what Jesus said later:

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ "**teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

So one is "born again" when he is baptized in water for the right reason and he begins to observe all the commands of Jesus which the Holy Spirit revealed in the written word.

Now, suppose a Christian sins again after he gets saved. Does he have to get re-baptized? Does he have to become "born again" again? The answer is no. Just as we are born only one time into our physical family, we are "born again" into God's spiritual family only once.

Ephesians 4:5

⁵ [There is] one Lord, one faith, **one baptism;**

So we can be baptized and "born again" only once. However, just as one can leave his physical family, one can also leave God's spiritual family (Gal. 5:4). Just as one can be disinherited by his physical father, one can be disinherited by the Heavenly Father (Mt. 5:13). If a Christian sins, like the prodigal son of Luke 15, he must decide to come back to God. When the prodigal son returned, he had to take several steps.

- (1) He had to repent. This means he had to change his mind about his lifestyle and about how he had treated his father.
- (2) Then he had to make a confession to his father and ask for forgiveness.

Luke 15:18-19

¹⁸ 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,

¹⁹ "and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."

When the son did these two things, the father was only too glad to accept the lost son back. These are the steps which a Christian must take when he sins. Like the prodigal son, a Christian has already been "born" into the right family, but he has left it all behind. Now he needs to repent (change his mind about what he's done) and come back confessing his faults and asking forgiveness from God.

1 John 1:7-9

⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Please notice that this was written, not to alien sinners, but to Christians. Alien sinners cannot be cleansed by merely praying. They must be "born again." But when Christians sin, they must repent and confess their sins in order to be forgiven and accepted back by God.

Proverbs 28:13

¹³ He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

James 5:16

¹⁶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

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