

The Meaning of Born Again

by Svend Christensen

Being born again is a spiritual transformation that gives us life from above and sets us free from sin, achieved through the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Duration: 38:50

Scripture: Genesis 1:2, Matthew 11:28, John 3:8, John 3:14-15, Ephesians 5:26, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 Peter 1:25

Topics: "Born Again", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by sharing a personal dream about shooting a moose out of season and the fear of facing the consequences. He contrasts this with the reality of those who wake up in hell with no escape. The preacher emphasizes the importance of being born again and warns about the fearful judgment of God. He urges the listeners to come to Jesus and find salvation now, as today is the accepted time. The sermon also touches on the power of the gospel, which unites people from different nationalities and inspires singing, fighting, and shouting for its message. The preacher concludes by mentioning a personal experience of shooting a moose without a license and being faced with the dilemma of what to do. The sermon then transitions to discussing the topic of the new birth and being born of the Spirit, highlighting the personhood of the Holy Spirit. The preacher indicates that in future sessions, they will delve deeper into the topic of God the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

I feel joy to be here this morning, wonderful to see many friends who have known different areas down through the years. To think what heaven's going to be like. It's like someone said about my head, there'll be no parting there.

I want you to turn, please, with me this morning to the Gospel of John, Chapter 3. Gospel of John, Chapter 3. In the evening sessions at least, we're going to bring a series on God the Holy Spirit. And this morning we're going to talk about the new birth, born of the Spirit, as we sang. That's to remember the Spirit of God is not just only an influence, He's a person.

They, God, with all their attributes of the Father and the Son. We need to keep that in mind. So let's read this well-known passage in John, Chapter 3, the first 16 verses.

Thus a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, the same came to Jesus by night and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these

miracles that thou doest except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, for canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, shows every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even so the Son of Man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

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. May the Lord add his blessing to the reading of his holy word. This morning we are talking particularly to the, and I'm sure it's also a doctrinal message, but particularly we're thinking about the gospel and being born again.

The gospel is a great subject. It works wherever it goes. I remember when I was in England, I heard the story that, you know, in Britain you have four nationalities.

There's the British or the English. You have the Irish, the Welsh, and the Scotch. And sometimes among these four different groups of people, there's a bit of friction.

But when it comes to the gospel, they're all together on that. The Welshman, he loves the gospel because he can sing it. And the Irishman, he loves the gospel.

It's something he can fight for. And the Englishman, he loves the gospel because it's something he can shout. And of course the Scotch, he loves it because it's free.

And that's a glorious gospel, isn't it? It is free. Now, we're going to start on the Holy Spirit this week. Now, there's a few things that's true of every believer in the Lord Jesus.

I say every believer, if you're truly saved, then you have been born of the Holy Spirit. You have been indwelt, and you are indwelt, by the Holy Spirit. You have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

You have been anointed by the Holy Spirit of God. You have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. You have the earnest of the Spirit, and also the witness.

These things are all true of every believer. However, there's a command that's not true of every believer, that they're not drunk with wine when there's excess, but be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit. I would like to deal with these subjects in the coming night, and maybe some in the morning.

I won't have time to deal with all of them in the evening. But I believe it's very, very important in the day that we're living in, when there's so much wrong teaching on the Holy Spirit, that we are not trying to combat that as such as to expose error. We rather want to teach the truth.

Like Spurgeon said one time, he was asked to defend the Bible. After thinking it over, he declined, and he said, you don't have to defend the Word of God. Just let it loose like a line, and it'll defend itself.

So I believe if we teach the positive teaching on God the Holy Spirit, and we establish in the truth, that will keep our error better than anything else. If you know the truth, the Lord Jesus said, the truth shall set you free. The morning we're talking about the New Birth, a common subject ever since President Carter's days when he came out and declared he was a born again believer.

Everybody then, of course, became quite a popular subject. Sometimes people misunderstand the subject altogether. They think if you get a heart transplant, and you begin to have a new lease on life, that's being born again.

That's not being born again. That's not what we're talking about. That's only extending that natural life.

That which is born of the flesh, said the Lord Jesus, is flesh. How can a man be born when he's old, said Nicodemus? So even if you get a new heart transplant or whatever else, it sort of gives you a new lease on life. That's not what the Bible is talking about.

It's talking about a life from above. Born of the Spirit, as we sang. We're born the first time to fit us for an earthly life.

We're born again the second time to fit us for a heavenly life in the presence of God. We're born with a natural, sinful nature, but when we're born of the Spirit, we're born and we're given the divine, we become partakers of the divine nature which fits us for the heavenly home. And isn't it wonderful to be born again? Our sister sang that beautiful hymn.

And isn't it an amazing thing that even when it comes to eating, there's many things that you either too often get tired of it, or think you're too often you get tired of doing that. You never get tired of the Lord Jesus. You never get tired of hearing of Him.

You're never tired of learning new things about Him. We're never tired. He becomes more and more precious to us with the years.

He certainly does. Now Nicodemus, the ruler that came to Jesus by night. Notice there was a certain man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus.

Now first, I want to talk about, just ask a few questions. Sometimes we speak about a topical subject like this, you ask questions. What is it to be born again? What is it to be regenerated, born of the Spirit, born from above? Just what is it? And that's what the Lord Jesus is talking about here.

And He gives us a very, very clear answer down through this portion. Just one very brief answer in our Jesus's answer, verse 5, very, very clear answer, that except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. There's something definite that has to take place.

We are not born of the Spirit by nature. We're only born, this is a work of God. This is a divine work.

When He regenerates, it makes us a new man in Christ Jesus. That's what it means to be born again. It means that you have life from above, that your sins have been dealt with, that you have now been given God's divine nature.

You belong to the family of God. And you don't belong to that the way we're born. We come into the world, we're sinners, and we're lost sinners, condemned sinners, unworthy of the least of God's mercies.

And that's the reason, my friends, why we need to be born again. So regeneration, being born again, is a great work of God. If we hear the Word of God, it will come and explain to you how we respond to that, that the Spirit of God works.

And then we're born again of the Spirit. But being a born-again believer means it's a person that knows right here now that you have eternal life, that God the Spirit dwells in you, and that you have all your sins flooded out as far as the east as from the west. You have that blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.

That's what we mean by being born again. It's not just being a member of a certain church, or being religious or something else. No, my friend, it's a complete change from within that works out.

And it's evident that if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. All things pass away, all things become new. Now, this wonderful portion of the Word of God, Nicodemus, you know, came tonight.

We might ask, who needs to be born again? Who needs to be born again? Well, Nicodemus was head and shoulders above others as far as religion went, beautiful character, upright, wonderful man. The Lord Jesus, when Nicodemus came and passed some compliments to him, you remember, we know you're a teacher come from God. No man can do these miracles unless God be with him.

And the Lord Jesus touched right on that thought, but Nicodemus, you must be born again. Nicodemus means the ruler of the people. He was a member of the Sanhedrin.

He was a very outstanding personality. And I suggest to you, if Nicodemus had to be born again, then we all have to be born again, without exception. Everyone has to be born again.

We're going to tell you the reason why. A wonderful illustration of that is given down in verse 14, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. The Lord was a wonderful illustrator of truth with me.

He said, Nicodemus, you know the Old Testament. You know back then the children of Israel, they sinned. And as they murmured and they sinned against God, and God sent fiery serpents among them.

And they were bitten. And everyone that was bitten by those serpents, they died. And you remember, Moses suddenly faced before God, and God said, make a serpent of brass, put it up on the pole.

And then when anyone is bitten, let him look, and he lives. That doesn't make much sense, does it? But it worked. The preaching of the gospels to them that perished foolishness.

But you try it out, like David said, taste and see that all is good. Blessed is the man that trusted in him. And everyone that was bitten, when they looked, they lived.

And the picture is this. If you look away from yourself, every one of us, we have been smitten by sin. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

There is not a man upon the earth that sinned not. We have all true Adam. By one man sin entered into the world and death by thence.

And so death hath passed upon all men. All have sinned. And just as they were bitten by the snakes and they died, so if you die of sin, Jesus says, where go you cannot come.

But if you look away to Christ, as Moses lifted up the serpent, so the Lord Jesus was lifted up on the cross to bear your sin in his own body in the tree. If you look away, you'll live. That's what he says right here.

That's a real illustration. All have to be, need to be born again. We've all been bitten by the serpent of sin, Satan.

Every one of us are sinned through Adam's fall. Sin has passed upon all men. Death, the graveyard, is the evidence of all sin.

Everywhere you go, you'll find the graveyard, tomb, death. For the Lord Jesus said, I've come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly. Now why do we need to be saved? Why do we need to be born again? Well, the Lord Jesus, he said, you must be born again.

There is no alternative. That's the first reason. The word of the Lord says, marvel not that I said unto thee, but to you individually, each one of us, you must be born again.

Not the one next to you, but you must be born again. That's the word and the command of the Lord Jesus. It's a must.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That's the final word of the Lord Jesus, the word of authority. And the reason that you have to be born again is that we said you are born a sinner.

So was I. We've all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We are sinners and we need to be set free. We need to be redeemed as we sang.

We are under, we are sold unto sin. And the great kinsman, Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, paid the price of his own precious blood to set us free out of the slave market and set us free from the power of sin in our lives to deliver us, to set us free so we could go on to glory. Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of sinners.

He died to set us free. Now, I want to go on with this. Who need to be saved? Everyone.

Why? Because we've all sinned and come short of the glory of God. There's not a righteous man upon the earth that sinneth not. Now, how are we born again? That's the question How can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? And here's where the wonderful truth comes of the Holy Spirit.

Now, I believe, friends, that the Word of God teaches us God, the Holy Spirit, has to do the work. Unless the Spirit of God does the work, you'll never be saved. We cannot understand a natural man receiving not the things of the Spirit.

And I believe before we ever save the Holy Spirit, he sets us apart for salvation. I want you to turn to a scripture in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 13. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. It's a remarkable verse there, and it compares very, very similar with the scripture in Peter.

But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God from the beginning chosen you, has from the beginning chosen you to salvation. Notice, true sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. God by his Spirit prepares us and sets us apart for salvation.

And this is very, very important. The Spirit of God does his work. And that's what the Lord Jesus meant when he said, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

These two are the agents that God uses, the Word and the Spirit. The Word of God. It's the Word of God that quickens it, and the Word of God sets us free.

Peter, 1 Peter 1, verse 2, says this, elect according to the full knowledge of God the Father, true... That's the same thing again, sanctification. That means to set apart, the setting apart of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

So the Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, I believe that's what he means. It's the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God enlightens our mind to take in the Word of God.

James, chapter 1, verse 18 says, of his own will he begat us with the word of truth, that we should be the kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Of his own will he begat us. It was according to God's will.

He begat us again, how? With the word of truth. 1 Peter 1, 3 says, being born again, not of incorruptible seed, but incorruptible by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. And then in verse 25 he said, and this is the word which is by the gospel is preached unto you.

He washed us with the washing of water by the Word, says he says. I believe the water there, some people say it's the natural birth. I don't believe that, friends.

I believe it's the Word of God. And God takes the Word of God. It's quick and it's powerful.

You search the Scriptures, says the Lord Jesus. There they would testify of me. And as he ministers the Word, as Moses lifted up the serpent, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

How can a man be born again? It's through the Word of God, preaching of the simple gospel. We're saved by the preaching of the gospel. Aren't you glad? That Word of God is quick and it's powerful.

I remember hearing that precious word for the first time as I could understand when I was 21 years old. I'd never heard the gospel before that. But that gospel was applied, was opened up to me by the Spirit of God.

And that's how I believed. And the Spirit of God made it clear to me. In Titus chapter 3, it's the very same thing.

Verse 5, not a works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord. So when you receive the Lord Jesus through the hearing of the Word, the Spirit of God, it says in 2 Peter chapter 1, we become partakers of the divine nature. And that's what makes us fit for heaven.

You can't go to heaven the way you are. You need to have the nature of God put within you, the divine nature. And isn't it tremendous that we earthly people have the very nature of God implanted in us? He said, no you're not, that your bodies are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

I think it's a marvelous and a wonderful time to live. You know, we might have lived in the earlier days when the Gentiles were just called dogs. But we're living in the dispensation of grace when he's taking up for himself a people from every nation and putting us into the body of Christ.

But that's how we're born again, by the Word of God and the Spirit of God, using the Word of God. Born again, not a corruptible seed, but incorruptible by the Word of God, we live it and abide it forever. A good illustration of that, too, is in Genesis chapter 1, where we see the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the deep, when everything was darkness and void and empty.

Remember God, the Spirit, said, let there be light and there was light. And so as the Word of God comes before us in the preaching of the gospel, and I want to explain that before you. The gospel is simply this, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

Every one of us are sinners, but Christ died for us. He shed his blood on our behalf. He willingly laid down his life.

And after that, when he hung upon the cross, he said, it is finished. That was complete, paid in full. And then the third day he arose again for our justification.

And this morning we see one who died, but he's alive evermore. He's risen, he's at God's right hand. And if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word says, thou shalt be saved.

John chapter 1 is a good explanation of it. John chapter 1, verse 11. He came unto his own, the Lord Jesus, and his own received him not, his own people, but as many as received him.

He's receiving a person. This is the Word of God now. As many as received him, to them he gave the authority or the right, the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, which were born not of flood, not of blood, doesn't come by natural descent, nor the will of the flesh, not by resolutions and so on, nor the will of man.

Man can't will it, but of God. We truly receive the Lord Jesus. We are born by the Spirit through the Word.

We're born of God, and we have life from above as we were singing. So the Spirit of God brooded upon that deadness, and out of it came light and life. And that's one thing the Spirit of God brings.

He brings light to our souls. He brings liberty. He brings love into our hearts.

Love and light and liberty and life, that we might have it more abundantly. Born of the Spirit of the living God. Ezekiel 4, throw that back in.

Ezekiel chapter 36, that he would give us a new heart. His Spirit would be put within us. And this is the time for telling.

We're living in the day when the Spirit of God dwells in the believer. And we're born of the Lord. I want to go back to John chapter 3 again, just for a moment, to finish this out.

Verse 8. I think it's a beautiful, wonderful verse. Now this is the marvelous move in the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. He blowed where he lifted.

God the Spirit works. Now you can't see it with the naked eye. I was saved in November 1942, laying in another bunk while I was serving in the Canadian Air Force.

I'd come home from hearing the gospel, and the preacher had been preaching on the second coming and also being ready to meet the Lord. And he said, now if you die tonight, where would you go? If the Lord Jesus came tonight, would you be ready to go with him? And I knew I wasn't. And two verses came back that I'd heard in the gospel.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The other verse was, him that cometh to me, I'll in no wise cast out. Well, I thought if he came to save sinners, he came to save me.

I was a sinner. I qualified. You need to know you're a sinner.

And the other one was him that cometh. So laying there in my bunk, I didn't know anything about getting up on my knees. I just as a lazy man laid in my bunk, and I said, Lord, save me a sinner.

I'll tell you, I was so happy after that I couldn't go to sleep. I'd been laying awake under conviction of sin for a long while. But when the Lord Jesus came in, I was born of the Spirit, and the joy of the Lord filled my soul.

That very night I pictured myself in the home church in Prince Edward Island. It was a large country church, and I was given the best gospel message I ever preached. Very first night.

But there wasn't one soul in that room that knew a thing about it. The Spirit, Lord, was lifted. Now here's the sound of it.

You cannot tell what come, what go. You'll see what the wind does. It carries the leaves.

It blows down things. It has mighty force. I'll tell you, the evidence of the new birth is a new life.

If any man be in Christ, it's a new creation. You love the things you didn't love before, and you turn against the things you used to love. Before I was saved, you couldn't drag me to a prayer meeting or anything like that.

And after I got saved, you couldn't keep me away. There should be a tremendous change, and there is a tremendous change. It works out, you see, from the inside out.

It comes, and that's what it means to be born of the Spirit. Now, when does that take place? Ephesians 1, 13 says, upon believing. Upon believing.

That very instant. Where can it take place? It can take place right here and now. If you're not saved, the moment you can sit right there and say, Lord Jesus, I'm a sinner, save me.

At that moment, you'll receive the Lord Jesus, and you'll be born of the Spirit. Anyplace. Nicodemus saved on the rooftop.

I was saved laying down my bunk. You can be saved sitting right here in your seat. But the point is, God puts the responsibility on you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has done everything that He could for you. Just remember, who needs to be born again? All need to be born again. Without exception, every man is a sinner, and needs to be born again because we're sinners.

And Jesus, the Lord Jesus said, so you must be born again. How can I be born again? By obeying the Word of God. By putting your trust in the Lord Jesus.

And the Spirit of God, He's brooding all this meeting. If you're not saved, He wants you to put your trust in the Lord Jesus so you can be born of the Spirit. And I want to close with it in John chapter 16.

The Spirit of God was sent not only to regenerate, but He's also to reprove. It tells us in John chapter 16 and in verses 8. When He's come, He will reprove the world of sin. The Spirit of God has been sent here to reprove of sin, to make you conscious of your sin, of your needs.

He's been sent to point out righteousness. The Lord Jesus was treated very, very unrighteously. But God has highly exalted Him.

And this morning, the Spirit of God would like to point out to you there's a perfect righteousness found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1 says, we're accepted in the Beloved. With all the acceptability of the Lord Jesus, you can stand before God accepted in Him.

Isn't that a great truth? And then He's also been sent to show judgment. The Prince of this world said, the Lord Jesus has been judged. In the coming day, I tell you, when the Lord Jesus died upon the cross, He won a great victory over death and sin and hell.

But everyone that's outside of Christ this morning, if you're not in Christ, you're going to then come under judgment. There's no judgment to them that are in Christ. Romans 8.1 tells there's no condemnation, no judgment.

Thank God He bore it all, paid for it all. But for those that are not saved, there's a judgment. And it's inescapable.

There's no escape from this judgment. God's Word says that very clearly. I want to close with a story, with a thing that happened to me.

One time I was staying at a place, the man had about five acres of land, beautiful trees, grass. I looked out the window, a big moose. And without thinking very much, I up, opened the window a little bit and aimed right between the eyes and shot him.

And that big moose came down. And all of a sudden it dawned upon me, I'm in a different country. I don't have a license, it's out of season.

What am I going to do? This big moose, will I bury it? What can I do? How can I cover this terrible thing up? See, I could just hear the headline, visiting preacher shot a moose out of season. I tell you, the perspiration was pouring off my face. I didn't know what to do.

But it was a way of escape. It was only a dream. It was a nightmare.

Oh, what a relief when I woke up. It wasn't so. I tell you, that was a tremendous thing.

But I want to say this, the rich men that woke up in hell, there was no dream. There was no getting out. There was a great conflict.

You must be born again. The Lord said, if you're dying, your sin might go, you cannot come. There's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The time to be saved is now. Today you'll hear it boys, hardened at your heart. Behold, now is the accepted time.

Behold, now to their salvation. Come now, said the Lord Jesus, and let us reason together. Him that cometh to me, he said, I'll in no wise cast doubt.

He said, come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And if you really come to Him, then you'll be born from above. You'll be given that divine nature.

You'll be given that power within, so you can live the Christian life and have the joy of the Lord in your heart and go on your way rejoicing like the eunuch did when he was saved. May that be your portion this morning. The way to come, the way to be born again.

We're just seeing a verse, maybe just as I am, and I will dismiss the sermon, just as I am, but at 293, I believe it was, no, I'm wrong. I had it all picked up in my Folster book. Here we are, 373, 373.

We're just seeing one stanza because the time is gone, and we're going to sing stanza number five, just as I am, thou wilt receive, will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve, because I promise, I believe, believe in the word of God, that's how we're saved. Number 317. We're just seeing the one stanza, stanza number five.

That's why I think we should re-sing. Sure as I am, thou wilt receive, will welcome, In the name of the Lord Jesus, shall one may really come, be born again, born from above, to hear thy word on the operation of the blessed Holy Spirit. Take us now to our various places in safety, commend ourselves truly, bless these days together, may the Spirit of God himself enlighten and illuminate our spiritual understanding.

We may come to love the Lord Jesus even better. We pray in his precious name. Amen.

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