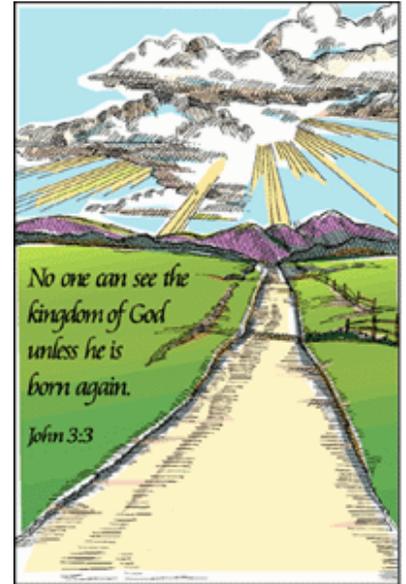


Baptism

A Rebirth

“Are you a born-again Christian?” When asked that question, I invariably answer, “Yes, when I was baptized as a baby.” The retort is predictable and emphatic: “No, no. I mean when did you decide to accept Jesus as your Savior? Or haven’t you been born again?”

Listen to our loving Savior: “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:5, 6). What a tremendous picture to emphasize pure grace! Jesus uses the picture of being born again to remind us that in our baptism a miracle was performed in our hearts. And what happened was entirely from God. Think of physical birth. We had no part in the process of conception. We didn’t feed ourselves in our mothers’ wombs. Nor did we thumb through the calendar to pick just the right month and day to celebrate as our birthdays for the rest of our lives. We had no part in the process of our creation. It happened to us.



What is true of physical birth is also true of our spiritual birth. It happened to us without our decision or activity. We who were dead in our transgressions and sins at birth have found new life in Jesus. Scripture declares, “Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4, 5). God made us alive through the special washing of Baptism. “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7). Please note the last part of this verse. In that washing of rebirth, God has declared us innocent. Our innocence is an accomplished fact in Christ Jesus, sealed to us through this precious washing of rebirth.

Yes, dear believer, you are born again in Christ. This rebirth is not a decision you arrived at. It is not a choice you made. Jesus clearly tells us, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16). Only as a result of the Spirit’s work through the means of grace can a believer now say “yes” to Jesus. Rejoice that God has come and created this new life of faith in your heart.