

Born To Be Adopted

John 3:6-7; Ephesians 1:5-7

Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org



FOCAL Read Responsively John 3:6-7 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. {7} **Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.**

Ephesians 1:5-7 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, {6} **To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. {7} In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;**

Today is the big day. The young boy's heart was racing with excitement. This day – the greatest of days – was better than anything he could think of. For years he wore the robe of the household servant while training for this day of days. He was instructed by the best tutors. One tutor taught him how to read and write, then went on to teach him the history of the Empire and its Senate. He learned how a refined gentleman should act. Another tutor trained him in the art of war, for every young citizen would eventually have to serve a term in his nation's armed forces. Sometimes this tutor cruelly bruised him, but he knew that every pain worked toward a greater good. A good soldier stood strong in the midst of the battle honoring his King. But today the training was over. On this day his father *would adopt him into the family*. Following the ritual of adoption this young man would put off the servant's robe and put on the toga of the citizen. He wouldn't just be a member *in* the empire, he would be a citizen – an integral part – of the Kingdom.

What does this have to do with our focal text? It has a lot to do with it. You see, in the ancient world *citizenship* was not lightly nor automatically conferred from parent to child. Citizenship was taught – and for good reason. An empire is no stronger than its citizens.

The ancient Greek society of Sparta was known for its soldiers. The motto of the Spartan was “come back with your shield, or lying upon it”. At one point in its history three hundred Spartan soldiers held off a superior Assyrian army of thousands. Why? Because that nation's children trained until their adoption as citizens. They were a people of purpose.

Beloved, God's people are a people of purpose.

If you have been saved, you were saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. You received Him as Savior. What does the Scripture say?

John 1:11-12 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. {12} But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

“As many as received Him” believing that Jesus is Who He said He is. Believing that He died on Calvary for sins, and believing that He rose again from the grave just as He said He would. If you have received Him “to you gave He power”. God never gives power without purpose. Electrical outlets are scattered throughout this Church building. Those outlets – *potential power* – are

not there to be decorative. The power is there to be used, and used rightly. The outlets are not there so that your children can push metal objects into their openings. The outlets are these *for our benefit*, to run vacuum cleaners and lights and speakers and heating and cooling units. To you who are saved gave He power to be used purposefully for the Kingdom.

To you gave He power to become the sons of God.

You may be saved by faith in Christ. If you are then Jesus says that you are “**born again**”. I pray that you are “**born again**”. But if you are “**born again**” that's not the end of the road. You are not finished, nor is God finished with you. The Lord is using you in this life to further His Kingdom. You are called to work with Him, to purposefully follow His guidance, until the day when your citizenship is granted. As the Scripture says:

Philippians 3:20 but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.^{HCSB}

One day we who have believed on Jesus for salvation will stand before our Savior. Born again, one day you will be adopted citizens of Heaven. Are you looking forward to that day, that glorious adoption day? You received power for a purpose. Are you fulfilling God's

HCSB Holman Christian Standard Version of the Holy Bible. I use this version here because the King James translators used the word “conversation” in place of citizenship. The Greek word used is G4175, *πολιτευμα*, *politeuma*, *pol-it'-yoo-mah*, From G4176; a *community*, that is, (abstractly) *citizenship* (figuratively), a city where we are to live. “Conversation” makes no sense to the modern reader.

purpose in your lives?

1. Are You Born Again?

FOCAL John 3:6-7 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. {7} Marvel not that I said unto thee, **Ye must be born again.**

Jesus told Nicodemus, the teacher who came to be taught by night, that “**you must be born again**”. This is a requirement of Heaven. Too many people today mistakenly believe that they are naturally good enough to get into God's Heaven. That's Biblically incorrect, and a lie from the pit of hell itself.

Jesus said “**you must**”. Not “**you may**” or even “**you can or should be**”. It is “**you must**”.

There's no room for wobble here, it is a requirement that cannot be exempted. The Bible tells us that Heaven is a **prepared place for a prepared people**. It is God's Heaven, and you cannot get into it without being *born into it*. Heaven is the place where the Family of God gathers. No strangers are admitted – **you must be born again**.

This birth that Jesus spoke of is radically different than the birth you have already experienced. If you're sitting here today you have already been *born once*. Two people, a female mother and a male father, came together in love and conceived you. For nine months you were

nourished by your mother until, one day, you were *born*. Birth is an interesting phenomenon, a miraculous gift from God. The word “born” means that you passed from one state to another, from one place to another. Your five senses – touch, taste, smell, hearing, and seeing – were being build during that nine month period. Following your birth you began to fully utilize these senses. You could see, smell, touch, speak, cry and demand attention. Birth, by the way, is also a very *involuntary thing*. When you were born you had absolutely no say in the matter. Your parents conceived you without asking your permission. No one asked you when and where you wanted to be born. You were born when you were born – period. It happened.

When you were born physically you became an independent living entity, a person. Your parents had to nourish you and provide for you, but you began to exercise choice. You spit out the green stuff that momma tried to push between your little gums. You cried when you messed up. You reached for things you shouldn't reach for, and were given time outs and discipline when you wouldn't behave.

“**You must be born again**”. Why wasn't the first birth enough to get you into Heaven? The Bible tells us that we all – though we are *physically alive are nonetheless spiritually dead*. We know you are *physically alive* because you can relate to each other. You can talk to one another, share your concerns and needs to one another, laugh, cry – in short, have a relationship with one another. You are not, however, naturally able to have the same type of relationship with God. **You must be born again**. You had to be born physically before you could

have a relationship – or have the potential for a relationship – with those around you.

The Bible defines “death” - not as cessation of life – but as “separation from life”. The person who dies physically is still alive – see Luke 16:23 and the account of the rich man and Lazarus.

The baby that has not been born is shut off from a relationship with anybody, even its mother. Though the mother loves that child forming within her she cannot discuss anything with that baby. It must be born into this world.

So it is with the Kingdom of Heaven.

You must be born again. You are effectively shut off from God because of your natural spiritual state. The Bible tells us “**we were dead in sins**” (Ephesians 2:5). Physically alive we were, prior to new birth, spiritually dead. We were “**alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works**” (Colossians 1:21). Prior to new birth we had no idea why *sin is sin*. To us the only sin was *not getting our own way*. The unsaved and unborn unbeliever is “**alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart**” (Ephesians 4:18-20). Romans 6:20 tells us that “**when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness**”. Dear friends, like Israel of old you were bound to Egypt and the world. Sin, a terrible and awful taskmaster, demanded that you serve it. When you did not those who were in like bondage around you –

servants of sin – pushed you to greater sin. Your hearts were blind to God. God was not your Father while you were in that state. The Bible says “**He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning**” (1 John 3:8-10).

Then one day, one blessed day, you heard the preacher tell you the good news. You were lost and undone, dead in your trespasses and sins, a child of hell. On that blessed day you bent your knee to Jesus, believing His Promise:

Romans 10:13 For whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

You did as the Apostle commanded, laying aside

James 1:21 .. all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

This Word of God – like seed - entered your heart, and the Spirit of God came to you. In that wonderful moment you experienced what Jesus commanded, “**you must be born again**”. You were **born again**.

Supernatural new birth does not take nine months, nor nine minutes, nor nine seconds, but occurs through the blessed operation of the Holy Spirit of God on the received Word of God in your hearts.

On the day that you were saved you were:

1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

Look at this text, dear Believer, if you are believers. You were **born again**, but **not of corruptible seed**.

The first birth, the physical birth, has as its source **corruptible seed**. Sin is in the seed, and sin is in the plant.

This is why we slowly degrade in these present bodies, for sin – that Old Sin Nature – is yet in our flesh. Your soul is saved by **incorruptible seed**, but your body has yet to be saved. One day your body will be saved. One day, as that old song says,

**This robe of flesh, I'll drop and rise,
To seize the everlasting prize¹**

A glorified body awaits those who have been born again. Adoption awaits those who have been born again!

If you have been **born again, the seed is incorruptible**. The Holy Spirit Who bore you is perfect and permanent. The Word of God that He operated on is perfect and permanent. Dear ones, you cannot lose that new birth, no more than you could lose the old birth. When you were

¹ Sweet Hour of Prayer by William Walford, c. 1840

born into this world you could never become unborn. Born into this life you will one day leave this life, but that birth was forever. Born of incorruptible seed you, like the **Word of God**, you will live and abide forever.

2. How Can I Know That I Am Born Again?

FOCAL John 3:7 ... **Ye must be born again.**

Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated² us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,

How can I *know* that I am **born again**? We, **how do you know you were born the first time**? How do you know you're born *now*?

Is it not that you have *a relationship with other living things*? The Bible tells us that those who are **born again are predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ**. Look at that for a moment.

The saved are predestinated. So many people are scared of the word “**predestinated**”, but it's a Biblical truth that you all need to know. The word “**predestinated**” means that God has *set an established path and a purpose for your life*. Just as the Roman parent put the child under a tutor until the day of adoption, the Lord has set you aside under the direction of a Divine Tutor. **God the Holy Spirit, using the same**

² Aorist Active Participle of G4309, προορίζω, proorizō, *pro-or-id'-zo*, From G4253 and G3724; to *limit in advance*, that is, (figuratively) *predetermine*: - determine before, ordain, predestinate.

Word of God that bore you, effectually works in the lives of the sons of God. You are still on this earth *preparing for the day of adoption, the day where you will enter your citizenship in Heaven*. You are predestined by God to

FOCAL Ephesians 1:5 ... **unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,**

Everything that happens to a child of God happens toward the day of adoption. Your instruction manual is the Word of God, and your Tutor the Holy Spirit of God. You move as a part of His Church, and serve Him through the giftedness He has given you within this local Church.

You are being prepared, dear believer, for the day when you can trade this old dead body for a glorified one. Just as the Roman child would trade in his servant's robe for a master's robe, one day you will stand before Jesus clothed all in white.

Until that day, *obey the Tutor*. The child of the Father is told to **abide – to heed Jesus – to rest in Him – to do righteousness**. The Bible says:

1 John 2:28-29 And **now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.** {29} **If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.**

You know you are **born again** because you **prepare for the adoption**. You **do righteousness, and not sin**. The little Spartan, given a wooden sword and a little wooden shield to train with, would never throw those things in the dirt or treat them lightly.

Though we can not perfectly follow our Lord, we follow Him to the best of our ability. As a good soldier of the Cross and candidates for adoption we strive to serve our Master.

What about the thief on the Cross? He did nothing, and yet was saved. Or is this false?

I have heard those who claim to be believers refuse to serve the Lord on the basis of the **dying thief**. You remember him, don't you? Two thieves hung on crosses, one to Christ's left and another to Christ's right. One thief mocked Jesus. But the other thief, rebuking his companion, said to the Lord:

Luke 23:42 ... **Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.**

I have heard professing believers speak and say **“the dying thief never was baptized, nor did he take the Lord's Table, nor did he tithe or do good works”**. Dear friends, do not justify your failure to serve God by pointing to the dying thief. God will never give you more to do than you are able to do. If you were *nailed hand*

and feet to a tree God would not command of you that you do what circumstances kept you from doing.

This thief was only able to serve the Lord with his mouth – and that he did right effectively. He rebuked the mocking world, and let his tongue speak up loudly for Jesus!

He was not baptized, but I have no doubt he would have done so had they pulled him free from that terrible tree of agony. Would you have been able to – in all humility – say unto Jesus “**Lord, remember me**” with nails through bone and flesh, and ribs gaping from your side? The work that thief did was one of the greatest works of righteousness a believer has ever done. He prepared for his adoption.

If you have been saved, God commands that you heed Him and prepare for your adoption. If you are **born again** you are commanded to love:

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

The servant living in Rome was never promised adoption, for that servant was not born into Roman society. God Who is love gave you love so that it would be used in this time of preparation. **Every one that loveth is born of God.** Are you saved? Not if you don't love. If the equipment's not there, and the Tutor – God the Holy Spirit – is missing, then you are not saved. “As

many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

Does the **Spirit of Adoption** live inside of you, teaching you, educating you for your eventual Heavenly citizenship?

You know that you are **born again if you love God and love others.** The Bible says:

1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is {born} of him.

You must love Jesus wholeheartedly, believing that He and He alone is the Christ, otherwise you may not be **born again.** If you believe that there are “many ways unto God” then you may not be saved, and you are certainly misleading others away from salvation. On adoption day the only thing that will allow you to stand before God is the fact that **the Blood of Jesus Christ has washed away all sins.**

What do we see in Heaven? Do we see statues of Buddha, Moroni, the Saints, Vashti, Muhammad, or grand cathedrals? No, dear ones, no!

On adoption day we see what John saw:

Revelation 7:9-10 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all

nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; {10} And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Jesus is THE Christ – there is no other!

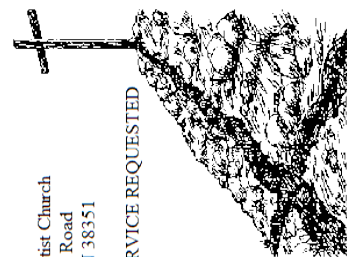
If you are born again you will *keep short accounts with God, confessing sin as soon as you recognize it in your lives*. When you were born again your attitude on sin changed. You know that “**he that committeth sin is of the devil**” (1 John 3:8), and you want nothing to do with the enemy. You know that “**whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God**” (1 John 3:10). Born again of incorruptible seed, you continue to look upward, waiting for that final adoption, that glorious day when you will see Jesus face to face.

You have a purpose, dear Christian, to **overcome the world**.

1 John 5:4-5 For {whoever} is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. {5} Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

You are not to be overcome of the world, but to overcome the world. You are preparing for the adoption which is to come. Are you doing this?

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED