

Scriptural Rebirth (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 January 2019

Preacher: Tom Holland

[0 : 00] We're going to continue our lesson tonight.

! I don't know if these series have touched you guys like it's touched me,! But boy, it's got me in the Word and on my face and on my knees.

To be saved, it is absolutely necessary to be born again. Jesus was very clear on that.

To be born again, also called rebirth, or the second birth, and a host of other things. But to be saved takes a supernatural act from God.

It's not done with our input. It is a supernatural act of God. We're going to be talking about that in a few weeks. And what I think is maybe the best lesson in this whole series.

[1 : 19] We don't get ourselves born a second time any more than we got ourselves born the first time. Just remember how much input you had in the first time, and that's how much input you had in the second time.

It's a supernatural act. The details, though, of how a person is reborn is outlined in Scripture.

And it goes under the name of the doctrine of regeneration. I mean, even that word regenerated, that explains, you know, a whole lot right there.

And let me say that no one is born again outside of or in violation of the scriptural blueprint.

You know, this guy didn't come this way and this guy that way. Now, the circumstances are different for every one of us in here. Some were raised in a Christian home. You were immersed in that by your parents.

[2 : 34] Some of us were looking when we were still 30 years old. I got saved at 30 or thereabouts. And so that part is different.

But we don't violate Scripture, the blueprint in Scripture, to get ourselves saved. We can't do that. So we need to memorize that fact.

Let me repeat it. No one is born again outside of, in violation of, apart from the scriptural blueprint. Rebirth is necessary. It is supernatural. And it must conform to Scripture. But a lot of books written on how to be born again.

Again, probably all well-meaning. And all wrong. We have to follow what Scripture says.

[3 : 35] The Scriptures teach that being born again is intensely personal. By that I mean that people being saved come one at a time into the kingdom of God.

Now, there are examples of many men and women responding to a gospel call.

One of the most well-known was in the book of Acts. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached and 3,000 people got saved. But each of those 3,000 people were born again individually.

It wasn't this mass rush down front to pray a prayer and get a track and put your name on a roll.

The seed that is planted within us and germinates into being born again is the Word of God.

[4 : 47] The written Word, the living Word. That's the seed. No one is reborn independent of that blueprint outlined in Scripture that I already mentioned.

It takes faith to be saved. We're going to be talking about that at length in the future. During the course of this study.

But where does faith come from? Faith comes from hearing and hearing the words of Christ. Romans 10, 17.

Faith comes by hearing. Back in John chapter 3, we see Nicodemus coming to Christ one night. In this portion of Scripture, the Lord Himself sows the Word of God into the heart of Nicodemus.

He casts those seeds right into the heart of Nicodemus. When Nicodemus arrived, he referred to Jesus as Rabbi.

[5 : 56] Rabbi is a title. It means teacher. So we have a teacher sent to Israel by God.

We know that Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, which met in the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus often taught in the temple in Jerusalem.

It is entirely possible that Nicodemus could have heard Jesus teaching at some point. I would go further and say it's probably likely. I think that's really what spawned his interest to seek Him out. So Nicodemus refers to Jesus as Rabbi. And he finishes his greeting by telling him, We know you're a teacher sent from God.

And the Lord immediately launches into teaching. Christ came to this earth to sow the seeds of the Word of God.

[7 : 02] If you will, to reveal the Father. He remarked to Nicodemus, Truly, truly, Or in that language, I mean, I mean.

Or, this is true, this is true. That'd get your attention in English, wouldn't it? I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

So Jesus is teaching a lesson to Nicodemus that the new birth is absolutely necessary to see the kingdom of God, much less enter in.

You can't even see it. He continues teaching when He says to Nicodemus, Again, truly, truly, this is true, this is true, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Very interesting verse of Scripture. We're actually in a few weeks going to devote an entire lesson to that verse. This water and Spirit.

[8 : 08] But here in the span of two sentences, the Lord has taught Nicodemus what it takes to see the kingdom of God and what it takes to enter the kingdom of God.

And of course, the Lord is drawing from the Old Testament as He instructs Nicodemus on the doctrine of regeneration.

Those were the only Scriptures available. He couldn't say to Nicodemus, well, turn to the third chapter of John. It didn't exist. Or let's read Paul.

Paul was probably barely born, if even born yet, and his first stop was to be persecuting Christians and killing them. So the only Scriptures available were Old Testament.

That's important because many believe that the doctrine of regeneration originates and is found only in the New Testament. That simply is not true.

[9 : 18] The New Testament had not even been written yet. Everyone saved in the Old Testament, and you know, we can name many, many, many, couldn't we?

Starting in Genesis and coming forward, had to be born again. That's God's blueprint. They had to be regenerated by the Spirit of God.

Remember, Jesus was surprised that Nicodemus, an Old Testament scholar, had no concept of the new birth.

He should have been able to get that from the Old Testament. Jesus continues to teach Nicodemus when he says, this in verse 7, you must be born again.

I told you last time, George Whitefield, the great evangelist, lady asked him, why do you preach so many times on you must be born again? And he said, because you must be born again. You must be born again.

[10 : 25] If rebirth or being born again is true, it must be supported by Scripture. And of course, the words of John, chapter 3, are compelling arguments for the veracity of being born again.

But the Word of God also mentions the doctrine of regeneration elsewhere. In James 1.18, it says this, Of His own, of His own will, He brought us forth, this is talking about God, of His own will, He brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

Very profound verse of Scripture. So we see here a supernatural book called the Word of Truth. By the act of God's will, it produces a supernatural birth.

The Lord then says, we become a kind of first fruits of His creatures. God causes us to be born again by the exercise of His will.

But the means of our rebirth is by the words of truth contained in the Holy Word. In other words, it must be based upon Scripture.

[11 : 52] That little word by is interesting. It means the means of achieving something. So God works in the exercise of His will by the means of the word of truth.

That's how He accomplished. When we were born again, God places the word of truth in our new hearts. The specific word of truth we are speaking is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I remember when this was all going on in my life and I had no concept of being born again, I can look back on it and I remember and I even went out and bought a Bible. I didn't own a Bible. I didn't, I mean, I probably had one at my mom's house, mom and dad's house, but I didn't have a Bible. So I went out and I bought a Bible. I just bought the first one I came to, King James. I like King James. No footnotes, no, you know, it wasn't MacArthur, he didn't write, he hadn't written one, it wasn't Sproul, it was just a Bible. [13:01] And I started reading it and guess where I started? Genesis. And I got through that and then I read Exodus. And then I came to Leviticus.

What is this? And I got nosebleeds, I'm laying in bed, that thing's hitting me in the face, you know. What in the world is this? I mean, I didn't know maybe you could start in John. I'd have had to go to the index to look up John. I had no clue. That's how I started. But God causes us to be born again by the exercise of His will and even calls us a kind of first fruits of His creatures. It says we are a kind of first fruits. That is an interesting concept. Farmers of old on the day of harvest would grab some handfuls of produce, whatever they were growing, and dedicate it to God as the first fruits of the harvest.

That's where that concept comes from. That's a beautiful picture of what is occurring in our rebirth. Those believers who were the first fruits in the first century were the beginning of centuries of believers.

[14:36] You know, I'm always amazed when we talk about the church and you realize we're the caboose. We're bringing up the rear. 99% of the church is in heaven.

They're already there. We're kind of the tail end unless the Lord waits a few more thousand years, I guess. He can do what He wants to. He's already way beyond my the date I set for the rapture. You know. But the vital point in James 1.18 is the implanting of the Word into the soul of man. That is how God works with all those born again or born from above. It's a spiritual birth that comes down. The very fact that it comes down from heaven tells you, I didn't have any input. It came down from above. And that is why after being born again we should immerse ourselves in the Word of God. And I would suggest especially the New Testament.

[15:48] And let me say this, when we have someone that comes and they've been born again regardless of age, that's when the church should, that's when our work should start not end.

and take those regardless of age and grow them and solidify that. Because how many times have we seen people come and say, well, you know, something's going on and I think I'm born again and I'm...

And then next thing you know they're gone. Right back out in the world. We've had that. I couldn't count, Mike. I need a calculator. Passage over in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 23.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit. For you have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and abiding Word of God.

You can't separate your rebirth from the Word of God. And Peter's speaking here obviously of saved people because he says they've been born again.

[16:58] Born anathen. Born from above. And note that they have not been born again through seeds that perish. True salvation doesn't perish.

Nothing about our rebirth into the kingdom of God came about naturally. It just didn't. It was super... It's a supernatural rebirth brought about by imperishable seed. Seed that does not perish. That seed that never dies is never corrupted. What is that seed? The Holy Spirit who caused Peter to write these words reveals that to us.

The imperishable seed is the living and abiding Word of God. We start to see how important this Word is and many of y'all have it or turn to it and some of you have electronic and this is the living and abiding Word of God.

[18:07] The seed here is not natural. It's not worldly. It is not of human invention and it is not of human imagination.

I mean, I have people all the time tell me, oh, that book was just written by a bunch of men. We'd never write that book. That book condemns us. We wouldn't write that book.

We wouldn't know how to write that book. And if I was going to write a book about God coming down and taking human pleasure, I'd have Him born in a palace with gold floors and gold faucets and I wouldn't have Him born in a stable laid in a manger.

Are you kidding me? I couldn't think that up. None of us could. The seed was sown into our life that produced the new birth and it was from God.

It came down to us and to all who believe from above where God in awesome Trinity dwells. Can you imagine?

[19 : 15] After all, it takes a supernatural seed to produce a supernatural birth. That's how it happens. The means of our rebirth is captured in the Word.

It is through something. It turns out it's through the living and abiding and enduring Word of God. So we have a supernatural book, the Holy Bible, by which God commands a supernatural birth that produces a supernatural life.

This means that God does not work in the new birth independent of His Word. That'd do it. In the passage in 1 Peter, the writer then provides a quote from Isaiah when he says this, All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass.

The grass withers and the flower falls or fades. All of mankind's efforts to come to God on his own or her own terms are like the grass that withers and we know about that in Oklahoma, don't we? the flower that fades away, it profits nothing but is only good to be burned up. But this is what Peter adds to that quoting Isaiah, But the Word of the Lord remains forever.

[20 : 54] Forever. Never going to go away. Never going to go away. That is the only way anyone can ever be born again. God must do it and when it is done by God and when it is done in God's way and it's true, it remains forever.

Ten billion millennia from now as we measure time, there won't be time in heaven, I'm convinced of that, but ten billion millennia as we measure time, it's still going to be there.

It's still going to be just right in the forefront. right in the forefront. And the Word of God is sown like seed into our heart and it has to be if we're to be born again from above.

And may I say, at the risk of alienating someone, and I hope I don't, but being born from above was not accomplished the moment we came forward in a church meeting or a tent revival.

It didn't happen when I repeated the prayer that some guy was saying, say these words and you'll be in. However well meaning that person was, and it didn't happen through water baptism and I grew up in the domination, they wanted to get you in that water.

[22 : 22] And when I was eight, they got me in there and all I got was wet. I came forward to be baptized for a very important reason. My six-year-old nephew went forward and I didn't think a nephew would be baptized before his uncle.

So I had a really good good reason to do that. But all I ended up doing was getting wet. It doesn't happen if you give a large sum of money to the church.

I've dealt with that over the years with people. A guy whose mother died, you know how much money she gave to that church? You're telling me she has to be saved by grace through faith? Yeah.

It happens because God does it through His Word. Paul concludes this, this part, by saying this in 1 Peter 1, verse 25, the second half of that verse.

And this Word is the good news that was preached to you. Wow. The Word of God is eternal.

[23 : 30] Only the eternal Word can produce eternal life. It's in the business of producing eternal life. there's a great truth found in Luke chapter 8.

And there's companion verses found in Matthew chapter 13. Starting around verse 5, the Lord gives us a parable and what He's up to here is He's preparing His disciples to go out and preach the Word.

He's dividing them up and they're going to go out into a very hostile world and preach the Word.

And He's really explaining to them why it is that not everybody will believe.

Not everybody will believe. And I've got to tell you, it used to, maybe I'm just odd, but we had all these programs. Remember, we're going to baptize 50 million by 1950 and we're going to baptize, you know, Ed Saucier when he was our pastor here, he was good friends with one of the name guys, I can't remember his name now, but he said, what's your goal for the church this year, Ed? And he said, we're going to baptize 100 people. He said, why? He said, well, I never thought of it. I guess, he said, let me tell you why you're going to do that.

[25 : 03] You're the president of a small corporation that's part of a larger corporation. If you're ever going to move up in that corporation, you've got to make them aware of you. And that's one of the ways you do it.

Baptize them if they've been born again. Baptize them if God is in it. But don't baptize them so you can send in a report to the association or Oklahoma City or Nashville.

Boy, that was strong. It was strong. So, Jesus here, the Lord here is explaining to His disciples, you're going to go out and preach and not everybody is going to respond.

Not everybody is going to get saved. In fact, and this is a fact, and it's a fact in the first century, and it's a fact, what century are we in now? 21?

21? I'm getting old. I think it's the 21st century. It's a fact now, more will resist the word preached than will come to faith in Christ.

[26 : 07] They just will. God gives the increase, the numbers small, the numbers few, few that find it. Many, and we could say even most, will refuse the message that brings life.

Only a remnant will believe the gospel that is preached. Beginning in Luke chapter 8, verse 5, a sower went out to sow his seed.

And as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it.

and some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture, and some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it, and some fell into good soil, and grew and yielded a hundred fold.

In Matthew, he said thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold. The sower here is the Lord Jesus Christ.

[27 : 26] Make no mistake, that's the sower. And we know, I believe it's verse eleven, that the seed is the word of God.

They went out, they went forth to sow the seed of God through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. and some of that seed fell on the path, and it was eaten by birds.

That path is hard soil. What do they call that in Texas? Hard pan? And it's hard as a pan. It's hard soil. The seed cannot penetrate it.

And it lays on top of the ground and was devoured by birds. I feed birds every morning. And I promise you they eat that seed, boy. The ground is not safe when the birds are there and they're always there.

They're in bed now, the raccoons and the possums are eating the rest of it. So this was on this hard soil, cannot penetrate, and it's devoured by birds.

[28 : 37] Spiritually, that's a very hard hearted person. He has no interest in the things of God. the message comes but does not penetrate into that hard heart.

They hear it but it does not go deep. And the worst case scenario is when they tell the pastor or one of us and says, oh yeah, yeah, I believe all that, oh yeah, it's okay. And they don't.

And they don't. And they hang around a few weeks and then they're gone. Because it never penetrated that hard heart. You ever know anybody have a hard heart? Plenty of them out there.

Other seed, and now my law enforcement career, I wrote down felony. Other seed fell on rocky soil and it grew a little, but rocky soil doesn't have life-sustaining moisture.

water. Because you got to have moisture, you got to have water. And it withered away. That is an example of shallow soil.

[29 : 48] Just a little bit of soil. And actually the word rock there is a ledge, like a limestone or outcrop. I've got those at my farm, my backyard.

And just a few inches below that soil and then it's solid limestone. There's no depth. But note there's an initial response because the seed worked into the soil slightly.

But it's not life-sustaining and it dies. This is not someone saved and then lost. This is a person never saved because they refused the blueprint.

They refused to do it God's way. And some of these people may hang out in the church. Particularly for the social aspects, fellowship. They may like the music.

They may like the camaraderie with other people. But there's no depth and they're false converts. They're false. Other seed fell among thorns and grew up water.

[30 : 59] But they were choked out. That is what we can accurately call crowded soil. There's a lot going on in that soil.

fruit. There is no room for the seed to germinate and bring forth fruit. This is the person that has so much going on in life they can't fit the Lord into their schedule.

They have too many other priorities and I've got one in my own family and you know who I'm talking about. And I've told him, I said, hey, you'll take time with the Lord now or you'll make time for him

later.

But it's talking to a hard heart right now. We keep praying. We keep praying. Do they ever give up? Reminds me of two farmers talking.

One said he didn't have time for church because he had to take care of his cows on Sunday morning. The other farmer said, well, how many cows do you have?

[32 : 10] And he said, well, I've got three. And the other farmer said, well, my herd is now at 150 and I was in church Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night.

And that conversation happened in this church between two of our young members. I heard it. And you know really what it boils down for not just us but anybody.

What's important in your life? What's important? I love what Ravi Zachariah does. He's talking about the importance of Christ in his life. When he gets up in the mornings, he gets up early, lets his wife sleep in.

He's got a prayer closet. And he said, every morning I'm in that prayer closet on my knees repenting of anything that was amiss the day before.

Any sin comes to mind. But I repent every day. And if I can't think of anything I've done, I'll say, Lord, you know them all.

[33 : 19] Bring them to my memory or cleanse me of them regardless. us. But what's important in our lives?

One thing is very certain though, Jesus has been choked out in these types of people's life. Totally choked out. But then we learn, and Jesus told the disciples, as you sow the seed, some of it's going to fall into good soil.

I like good soil. This soil was receptive to the seed. It was moist.

It had nutrients. The seed fell into this soil and it grew up. Germination occurred. And only God can bring forth life out of soil.

You think that's amazing. They take a seed, put it in good dirt, and it comes alive and it grows. I remember a number of years ago, archaeologists found sacks of wheat seed in the very depths of the pyramids.

[34 : 43] 5,000 years old. I've been to the pyramids. They're big. they took some of it, they planted it, and it grew. Just amazing.

The people of the good soil hear the word of God and rightly respond. This is the parable showing the importance of the word of God being placed into the heart of a man or woman whom God is saving.

So many are not interested. But in this fourth soil, the seed responds differently than the other three.

This is the heart of the one born again, born from above. Good soil. God plows good soil. God was preparing that heart just like preparing good soul.

soil. Many years ago I had an old Scofield Bible. And had a bunch of blank pages in the front and the back. I started writing down people's names that had influenced me concerning the gospel of Christ, that had brought a message to me.

[36 : 04] Some were ministers on the radio or TV, but others were personal friends, people I was in the service with and law enforcement with, relatives, friends, you know, just, I had like 28 names.

Then I got the Bible rebound, they ripped that page out and threw it away. It disappeared. Soil preparation. And when God was ready, there was a regeneration resulting in a new birth, a rebirth. Everyone who is born again first has the Word of God brought into their mind and into their heart. They might not even be able to tell you where it's at, Old or New Testament, they know there's an Old or New Testament, but God births that in their mind and heart.

It is those people God has caused, or through them, to bring forth life. And it galls me when I hear people try to take credit for their regeneration.

I heard a man in our church 30 years ago, he's not here anymore, and he said, one of our pastors preached on being the chosen of God, and he said, God didn't choose me, I chose him.

[37 : 28] I remember when I did it. He had nothing to do with it, it was all me. Really. May God bring forth life in us.

As Matthew says, some 30, some 61, and some 100 fold. Regeneration! is the root. Bringing forth fruit is the evidence that regeneration or the new birth has occurred.

So we have that which only God can see, the root, and we have the fruit that we can all see if God allows us. Here's my concluding remark for tonight.
you are not saved because you bear fruit. You bear fruit because you are saved.
God not have to have you have have! you have you to Thank you.