

Born Again: From a New Heart to a New Life

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Texts: Ezekiel 36:26–27; Colossians 2:1–15

Theme: True spiritual rebirth is not just a prayer—it is a divine transformation initiated by God, grounded in Christ's finished work, and lived out in obedience and new identity.

1. True Salvation Begins with a New Heart from God

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:26 (NLT)

"I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart."

Explanation:

Many people believe that being "born again" is as simple as saying, "Jesus, come into my heart."

But Scripture reveals that God doesn't just enter a corrupt heart—He replaces it.

The heart in Scripture is not just the emotions—it's the center of our will, desires, and moral direction.

A "stony heart" is hard, unfeeling, resistant to God, and full of pride and sin.

Jesus said in Matthew 15:19, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander."

The heart is the source of our actions.

So, if God is to truly dwell in us, He must first cleanse and renew the heart.

Ezekiel 36 was spoken to Israel in exile—God's people had broken covenant, worshiped idols, and rebelled.

Yet God promised not just restoration, but regeneration.

This prophecy points forward to the New Covenant that Jesus would establish (Luke 22:20).

Example:

Imagine a house filled with garbage, rats, and mold. Would you move in?

No—you'd tear it down and rebuild.

In the same way, God doesn't just clean up our sinful nature; He gives us a new foundation—a new heart.

Consider the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10).

When Jesus encountered him, Zacchaeus didn't just say a prayer—he was transformed.

He gave half his possessions to the poor and repaid fourfold those he had cheated.

Why?

Because he received a new heart that loved justice and generosity.

Application:

Ask God to search your heart: "Search me, O God, and know my heart!" (Psalm 139:23).

Don't settle for religious rituals.

Seek a heart transformation.

If you're struggling with the same sins, the issue may not be willpower—it may be that you need to cry out for God to give you a new heart.

"It is not your job to change your heart—it is God's job.

Your job is to surrender and ask Him to do it."

2. Salvation Is Based on Christ's Finished Work—Not Our Feelings or Efforts

Scripture: Colossians 2:13–14 (NLT)

"You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away.

Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.

He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross."

Explanation:

Many reduce the gospel to: "Just believe in Jesus."

But biblical faith is not vague—it's faith in what Christ has already accomplished.

Paul emphasizes in Colossians 2 that we were spiritually dead—unable to respond to God on our own (Ephesians 2:1).

Like a corpse, we couldn't raise ourselves.

But God, in His mercy, made us alive together with Christ.

This is grace.

The word “forgave” in verse 13 literally means “to send away.”

Our sins weren’t just covered—they were removed.

And the “record of debts” (or “handwriting of ordinances”) was a legal document in the ancient world listing a person’s debts or crimes.

God took that document—our criminal record of sin—and nailed it to the cross.

Christ paid the penalty in full.

This is why we can say: It is finished (John 19:30).

Salvation is not a process we complete—it’s a gift we receive.

Example:

Imagine a prisoner on death row.

He can't earn his freedom.

No amount of good behavior will erase his crime.

But if the king steps in and pays the penalty, cancels the sentence, and sets him free—that's grace.

That's what Christ did for us.

On the cross, He bore the legal penalty for our sin.

The debt is paid.

The verdict is: Not guilty, because Christ was punished in your place.

Application:

Stop trying to earn God's favor.

You already have it in Christ.

When guilt whispers, "You're not good enough," remind it: "The record was nailed to the cross."

Rest in Christ's finished work.

Your standing before God is based on His righteousness, not yours (2 Corinthians 5:21).

"Salvation is not about what you do for Jesus—it's about what Jesus did for you."

3. You Receive a New Spirit—The Indwelling Presence of God

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:27 (NLT)

"I will put my Spirit in you, empowering you to follow my decrees and live by my regulations."

Explanation:

A new heart is not enough—God also gives us a new spirit.

This is the Holy Spirit, who comes to live inside every believer (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Jesus promised in John 14:16–17, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth."

The Holy Spirit is not a force or feeling—He is a Person: God Himself dwelling in us.

He convicts us of sin (John 16:8), guides us into truth (John 16:13), empowers us for holiness, and produces fruit in our lives (Galatians 5:22–23).

Without the Spirit, we cannot truly obey God.

The old nature is too strong.

But with the Spirit, we are empowered to live a godly life.

Example:

Think of a sailboat.

The boat may be beautiful, but without wind, it goes nowhere.

The Holy Spirit is the wind that propels the believer forward.

A Christian without the Spirit is like a boat stuck in the harbor—motionless, ineffective.

In Acts 4, the disciples were afraid, hiding after Jesus' ascension.

But after receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they boldly preached the gospel—even in the face of persecution.

Why? The Spirit had come.

Application:

Are you trying to live the Christian life in your own strength?

You will fail.

Invite the Holy Spirit daily: "Fill me, lead me, empower me."

Don't quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Obey when He convicts.

Worship when He moves.

"You don't need more willpower—you need more of the Spirit."

4. Baptism Is Your Public Identification with Christ's Death and Resurrection

Scripture: Colossians 2:12 (NLT)

"For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead."

Explanation:

Baptism is not a ritual to earn salvation.

It is a symbolic act of faith that identifies us with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

In the ancient world, baptism was a public declaration: "I belong to Christ."

My old life is over. I am now His."

Paul says in Romans 6:4, "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

When you go under the water, you are symbolizing dying to your old self and being buried.

When you come up, you are rising to walk in the newness of life.

It's a picture of the gospel.

Jesus was baptized not because He needed forgiveness, but to fulfill all righteousness and set the example (Matthew 3:15).

Example:

Imagine a soldier enlisting in the army.

He doesn't become a soldier by thinking about it.

He puts on the uniform, takes the oath, and is publicly recognized.

In the same way, baptism is the believer's uniform—a public declaration of allegiance to Christ.

The Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:36–38 didn't wait.

As soon as he believed, he said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?"

And Philip baptized him immediately.

Application:

If you've believed in Christ, be baptized.

It's not optional—it's obedience.

Don't delay because you're not "ready enough."

Baptism is for those who have already been made new.

Let your baptism be a testimony to your family, friends, and church: "I have died to sin. I now live for Christ."

"Baptism doesn't save you—but it declares that you are saved."

5. A Transformed Life Is the Evidence of Being Born Again

Scripture: Colossians 2:10 (NLT)

"You are complete through your union with Christ..."
Ezekiel 36:27

"I will put my Spirit in you, empowering you to live according to my regulations."

Explanation:

True salvation produces change.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:17, "Every good tree bears good fruit."

A new heart, a new spirit, and union with Christ result in a new lifestyle.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

This doesn't mean perfection—but it does mean progress.

There should be a noticeable difference.

In Colossians 2, Paul warns against empty philosophies and legalism (verses 8, 16–17), but he also calls believers to live in the fullness of Christ.

You are not incomplete.

You don't need extra rules or rituals.

You need to walk in the reality of who you are in Christ.

Example:

Think of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

It doesn't just feel different—it is different.

It no longer crawls; it flies.

In the same way, when you're born again, your nature changes.

You may still struggle, but your desires change.

You start loving prayer, hating sin, serving others, and hungering for God's Word.

The apostle Paul was once a persecutor of the church (Acts 9).

But after meeting Christ, he became the greatest missionary of the early church.

Why? He was a new creation.

Application:

Examine your life: Are there areas where you're still living like the old self?

Repent and renew your mind (Romans 12:2).

Let your life prove your faith. As James 2:18 says,
"Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you
my faith by my deeds."

"A changed life is not the cause of salvation—it is the
evidence of it."

Conclusion:

The Full Picture of Being Born Again

Being born again is not a one-sentence prayer.

It is a divine process:

God gives you a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26)

You believe in Christ's finished work (Colossians
2:13–14)

You receive the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:27)

You are baptized into new life (Colossians 2:12)

You live a transformed life (2 Corinthians 5:17)

This is the gospel in fullness.

Call to Action:

If you've never truly repented and believed, do so today.

Ask God for a new heart.

If you've believed but not been baptized, commit to it.

Let it be your first act of obedience.

If you're struggling to live the Christian life, stop relying on yourself. Cry out for the Spirit's power.

If you've drifted, return to the cross. Remember: Your debt was canceled. You are alive in Christ.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for not leaving us in our sin.

Thank You for giving us new hearts, forgiving our sins, and filling us with Your Holy Spirit.

We praise You for the victory of the cross and the new life we have in Jesus.

Help us to live as those who have truly been born again—holy, obedient, and bold.

May our lives bring glory to Your name.

In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

Final Scripture:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
— 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)