

50 Commands of Christ - 12 - (#42-43)

42. Be born again—*John 3:7*

Nicodemus was skeptical about being born again and asked Jesus how this could take place. Jesus patiently explained what he meant in John 3:5-21. How would you describe what it means to be born again to someone?

How did Jesus expect Nicodemus to know about the “new birth” from the Old Testament? (*Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 11:19, 36:25-27*)

Is it necessary to be born again to enter the Kingdom of God? (*John 3:5*)

Is it possible to be born again without Jesus Christ? (*Acts 4:12, Romans 6:23, 1 John 5:11-12*)

Why is it necessary to be born again and thereby receive salvation? (*Romans 3:23, Isaiah 53:6, 59:2, Psalm 53:3, Romans 6:23*)

Why are some spiritual truths often hard to understand? What are some spiritual truths that you struggle with? How do you seek answers for your questions?

43. Await my return—*Matthew 24:42-44*

Why do Christians need to watch for Jesus’ return and be ready? After all, aren’t we already saved?

How does Jesus illustrate the necessity of being ready for his return?

If a non-Christian looked at your life could he accuse you of not believing in the imminent return of Jesus Christ?

How can we have a sense of expectation about the return of Christ?

If Jesus returned to earth while you were on your way home from this Bible study, would you like him to wait a) a few minutes, b) a few days, c) a few months, or d) longer for you to get your affairs in order and prepare to meet with him?

What things would you need (or like) to do in order to be totally prepared to meet Jesus today? Why have you not done them?

50 Commands of Christ - 12 - (#42-43) - Leader's Guide

42. Be born again—*John 3:7* - You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

The concept of being born again (or a new birth) is found several places in the OT.

Jeremiah 31:33 - "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God.

Ezekiel 11:19 - I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 - ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Is it necessary to be born again to enter the Kingdom of God?

Absolutely, yes.

John 3:5 - Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

Is it possible to be born again without Jesus Christ?

No.

Acts 4:12 - Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 5:11-12 - ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Why is it necessary to be born again and thereby receive salvation?

a. Because you have sinned.

Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Isaiah 53:6 - We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

b. Because of your lost and fallen condition:

(1) Your sins have separated you from God.

Isaiah 59:2 - But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

(2) Mankind is depraved and inclined towards sin.

Psalms 53:3 - Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

(3) The penalty of your sin.

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(4) You are spiritually dead.

Ephesians 2:1 - As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.

John 3:36 - Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

Depending upon your group, you may want to discuss the following from the Salvation seminar were written by the late J. George Cover (misslink.org/born.html)
How can a person be born again?

I. God's Part.

(1) Jesus Christ died in your place and for your sins so that you can be forgiven and receive that new life. I Cor. 15:3; Isa. 53:5,6,12; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:9; I Pet. 3:18; Heb. 9:28; I Pet. 2:24; Rom. 5:8.

(2) Forgive sins. Heb. 10:16,17; I John 1:9; Isa. 55:7; Isa. 43:25; Isa. 44:22, 1:18.

(3) Give Spiritual Life. Eph. 2:1,5; I John 5:11 13; St. John 3:1-7.

II. Your Part.

(1) Choose to be. Choose the way of Jesus instead of the way of Satan; choose to call on the Lord for salvation. Choose whom you will serve. Josh. 24:15; Rom. 10:13.

(2) Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Absolute trust. John 3:16-18; John 8:24; I John 5:10.

(3) Receive Him. John 1:12.

(4) Repent. (Be sorry for your sins - confess them - leave them.) Acts 3:19; Acts 2:38; Luke 13:5.

(5) Confess Christ openly. Rom. 10:9-10.

(6) Be Baptized. Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19.

43. Await my return—*Matthew 24:42-44* - ⁴²“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Why do Christians need to watch for Jesus’ return and be ready? There is a huge web site (blog) devoted to this question alone. The diversity of answers is quite astounding ranging from one claiming it simply a repeat of the messiah prophecy in Daniel 7:13-14, so actually Christians have nothing to wait for. Another said it’s like people waiting at a bus stop to catch a particular bus. They cannot just stand there and hope the driver tells them “hey this is the bus that you are waiting for.” You have to watch for the bus and be ready to catch it when yours comes. Similarly, Christians have to watch and be ready when the Lord comes or they will miss him. Another likened it to a Boy Scout who is always prepared.

Steve May, a pastor, tells a joke about a man calling for fire insurance while his home is on fire to demonstrate that we can’t wait until the last minute.

How does Jesus illustrate the necessity of being ready for his return?

He illustrates this by comparing His coming to that of a thief. We normally do not look for thieves. Understandably, thieves do not advertise their coming, but by taking precautions, we can prepare against their coming. We can lock our houses and hide our valuables in safe places. We can install security alarms and exterior lighting to discourage burglary.

In the same vein, Jesus urges His people to be vigilant, alert, wakeful, and constantly watchful because a thief’s principal weapon is surprise. Even to those who are aware, His coming will occur with jarring suddenness—and more so to those who are distracted by ordinary occupations, ‘eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.’ The teaching in this parable is that to live without vigilance is to invite disaster.—John W. Ritenbaugh.