

Was Jesus Christ BORN AGAIN?

*Here are Scriptures to baffle most professing Christians.
How could Christ, Himself, have been born AGAIN—WHEN?*

by Herbert W. Armstrong

One year ago, in The Plain Truth of February, 1962, appeared an article captioned “*Just What do You MEAN—Born Again?*” It warned: “Don’t be too sure you know! Many religious people talk about being ‘born again,’ who don’t really know what Christ meant by those words.”

That article of a year ago is available in booklet form—free for the asking.

Impossible to Believe?

But how many realize that Jesus Christ, Himself, was born again—and in the *same manner* in which He said WE “must be born again?”

Does that seem incredible?

Just what *did* Christ mean, when He said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be BORN AGAIN, he cannot see the Kingdom of God?” The universally accepted idea of fundamentalist Christians is that being “born-again” means *the experience of having one’s sins forgiven*. They call it a “born-again experience.” By it they mean a SINNER being converted—experiencing *salvation from SIN*.

Many fundamentalist Protestants will say: “I am a sinner born again, and saved by grace,” and similar expressions. *Have* these people really been born *again*—or have they only been deceived? Have they had the *same* “born-again experience” CHRIST had?

But *wait a minute!* Surely that last sentence can’t mean what it said?

Was JESUS CHRIST actually *born again*? And in the *same manner* that He taught that *we* must be born again? INCREDIBLE? UNBELIEVABLE? Was Jesus Christ a sinner—did He need salvation from sin? *NO! Of course not!* Yet Jesus Christ was BORN AGAIN—just as He taught that We must be born again!

I now show you one Scripture—and *there will be more* later in this article—but most readers who claim to have been “born again” will not believe it, though it is THE VERY WORD OF GOD.

Here it is:

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, *that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*” (Rom. 8:28-29).

Jesus Christ is THE FIRSTBORN OF MANY BRETHREN!” Jesus Christ was BORN AGAIN, and the FIRST of many brethren to be BORN AGAIN!

Yet that very Scripture will not be believed by many who claim to have already had a “born-again experience.”

WHY Many Can’t Believe it!

I am going to give you even plainer Scriptures that say Jesus Christ was the FIRST to be BORN AGAIN, in the same manner that He taught that WE must be born again. Yet many who read these words WILL NOT BELIEVE THESE SCRIPTURES.

Do you know WHY? Let’s take time to UNDERSTAND!

Just what *does* take place in the mind of the average person when confronted with a Scripture statement *contrary* to his own belief?

The average mind reacts in this manner: Whatever he has been taught, or has heard or read, and is the accepted belief of his church, he has ASSUMED to be true. It has become rooted in his mind AS IF it were *true fact*. It has become FIXED—lodged hard and fast, in his mind. Millions have the firmly rooted belief that to be “born again” *means* the experience of a SINNER being converted and put under grace.

Every Scripture that has anything to do with “born again” is viewed from this concept. It—what HE already believes, NOT what God says—is the fixed concept by which he approaches anything on this subject. His own conviction, erroneous though it may be, is his starting point for considering any Scripture on the subject—his approach—the very BASIS *by which* he seeks to understand or explain this Scripture.

It never will even occur to him that HIS BELIEF—his definition of what “born again” means—could be wrong. He has firmly ASSUMED *this conception* to be FACT. His mind, therefore, will seek to understand this scripture *according to his erroneous belief*—but NEVER to question or harmonize his belief *according to the Scripture*.

If he is unable to square the Scripture with his own belief, then he does one of two things. Either he tries to INTERPRET the Scripture *according to his idea of being born again*, or his mind becomes CONFUSED, and he simply runs away from it—changes the subject—dismisses this Scripture from his mind.

The first of these two reactions is the explanation for the hundreds of different denominations, each having A DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION, of the Bible! To *interpret* the Bible is to put your meaning into it—to twist it to mean what YOU want to make it mean, instead of what GOD made it to mean and wants you to understand.

In other words, the average person who says he has already been “born again” is spiritually BLINDED to seeing the TRUTH on this point. Perhaps it is IMPOSSIBLE for him to even *see* the truth. He has accepted one of the fables to which God said, through Paul, the world would be turned.

That satanic MOTHER of harlots, described in Revelation 17, has deceived the world. And the world is, spiritually, DRUNK on her false teachings. A physical drunk man cannot see material things clearly and distinctly. They become blurred, out of focus. A spiritually drunk person cannot see GOD’S WORD clearly and distinctly. The above explains the reason. He tries to see God’s WORD through the eyeglasses of these false teachings he has absorbed from the daughter churches of the “Great Whore” (Rev. 17:1, 5).

It simply *cannot* seem to occur to his mind that what he has so carelessly accepted could be wrong.

Tell such a person that being “born again” as Christ taught we should be, does NOT mean that experience that takes place when a sinner has his sins forgiven, is converted and put under grace, and he will say: “You can’t tell me that! I KNOW! I’ve had the EXPERIENCE, brother!” He may have had an “experience”—but it was a *different* experience than what Christ meant by being born again!

WHAT the Bible IS

WHAT’S WRONG? Not only are millions spiritually BLINDED by the false doctrines that came out of spiritual BABYLON, but almost no one, it seems, realizes just WHAT the Bible IS.

It is God’s Message which He sent FOR MANKIND. It is the revealed KNOWLEDGE, inspired by God—basic knowledge man *needs*, but cannot otherwise acquire. It is the FOUNDATION of all true knowledge.

And what is the PURPOSE of the Bible? You'll find it in II Tim. 3:16. Its purpose is to CORRECT us where we are wrong. To REPROVE us. To reveal to us TRUE doctrine, and correct us where we have accepted false doctrine—and the prevailing fundamentalist concept of being “born again” IS FALSE DOCTRINE! Its PURPOSE is to instruct us in TRUTH, in RIGHTEOUSNESS. To CHANGE OUR MINDS!

This, right here, is going to be a crucial test for many readers of *The PLAIN TRUTH*. Ask yourself: ARE YOU WILLING to be corrected by GOD'S WORD, on points where you have been deceived? Remember, the *whole world has been deceived!* God says so! Read it in Revelation 12:9, and 20:3. A deceived person is one who really and sincerely BELIEVES he is right. He may be sincere—but there can be a lot of SIN in that word “sincere.” Can you find it? Look at the first three letters!

Yes, you may be wholly sincere and HONEST in your conviction, and still have been deceived, and therefore WRONG! And if you now reject this knowledge from God's word, God will reject YOU! (Hos. 4:6).

Are YOU able to let God's Word correct you, when you have accepted and believed something contrary to the truth? Can you admit that it just *might be* that you, and millions of others, have been taught WRONG about being “born again?”

WHEN Christ Was Born Again

Notice again, carefully, Romans 8:29. It is speaking of Christ, the Son of God. It says, plainly, that Jesus Christ was “the firstborn of many brethren.”

This shows that *many brethren* were to be born—but that Christ was the first OF these brethren—the first to be so BORN.

WHO are the “brethren?” In Romans 8:12, Paul shows his epistle which we call the Book of Romans was addressed to the BRETHREN. He says: “Therefore, BRETHREN,…” Now to whom is this epistle addressed? Notice Rom. 1:7—to those “beloved of God, *called to be* SAINTS.” Paul addresses his letter to the Corinthians thus: “Unto the Church of God, … to *them that are sanctified* in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints.” And in verse 10, “Now I beseech you, BRETHREN.” The BRETHREN are those who have been *converted*—UNDER GRACE—who are SAINTS.

Romans 8:9 says Jesus was BORN first, before any of these brethren.

Now WHEN was He *so* born? Is this speaking of His HUMAN birth, His FIRST birth, of the virgin Mary? Well mark this fact, and mark it well! Jesus was born 33 1/2 years *before* the Holy Spirit came on that day of Pentecost—*before* the CHURCH began—*before* these BRETHREN came under GRACE. Were any people 34 years old converted, baptized, and put under grace that day—any 35, or 40, or 50? If there was a single one older than 33 1/2, then he was born (as a human) *before* Jesus. In that case Jesus could not have been the FIRST of these BRETHREN to be born.

This is not speaking of Jesus' first and human birth at Bethlehem. It is speaking of His being born AGAIN—*after* He was born of the virgin Mary—because many BRETHREN were born (of human birth) before Jesus.

Next consider—since this Scripture—Romans 8:29—*cannot* refer to Jesus' *first* and human birth at Bethlehem, it *must*, of necessity, refer to a *second* birth—to being born *again*.

Now WHEN was Jesus born *again*—AFTER His human birth of the virgin Mary? Did Jesus have the same “born-again experience” millions of people profess to have had? Was Jesus Christ a SINNER? Did He need, or ever receive, forgiveness of SIN? Did He need salvation from SIN?

I am sure every person who professes this “born-again experience” will agree the answer is NO! A thousand times NO!

When the Scripture says that Jesus was “the first BORN of many brethren,” we have to agree that this birth was NOT the conversion of a sinner, being put under grace. It was NOT the same kind of being BORN AGAIN that has been erroneously taught, and so widely accepted!

Yet, since He was the firstborn of *many brethren*, these many brethren are to be born *AS* He was—the SAME KIND of new birth!

By process of elimination we have now proved:

- 1.) This BIRTH of Christ in Romans 8:29 was not His first, or human birth of the virgin Mary. Therefore it had to be a later birth—a being born AGAIN.
- 2.) It was NOT the kind of “born-again experience” so commonly professed—NOT receiving salvation from SIN. Yet He was born AGAIN!
- 3.) Therefore, it leaves only ONE POSSIBILITY. It was His SPIRITUAL birth, when He was BORN OF GOD, BY His RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD!

When He was born at Bethlehem, as a human, He was born as the Son of MAN.

Continually, through His ministry, He called Himself the “Son of MAN.” But He was BORN AGAIN—born of God by His RESURRECTION, as you read in Romans 1:3-4:

“Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (His HUMAN BIRTH OF MARY—making Him the Son of Man); and declared to be *the Son of GOD* with power, according to the spirit of holiness, BY THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.”

This Scripture speaks of the TWO births of Jesus Christ. The one, of the virgin Mary, a descendant of DAVID, by which He became the Son of Man. Then later, He was born AGAIN, this time as the Son of GOD, by His RESURRECTION from the dead!

In Context

Before leaving this Scripture in Romans 8:29, let’s notice the theme of the whole chapter—let’s be sure we understand it in CONTEXT.

What is the *theme* of this chapter? It is generally called “the Holy Spirit chapter.” But it is showing how God, by the Holy Spirit, changes us from carnal and sinning humans into, ultimately, sons of God, by the RESURRECTION from the dead.

Serving the flesh, we cannot please God (verse 8), but (verse 9), we are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in us.

“But” (verse 11), IF the Holy Spirit dwells in us, even AS God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, WE ALSO shall be RESURRECTED *by His Spirit* that dwells in us. READ IT in your Bible. Even AS Christ was BORN AGAIN, born of God, by His resurrection, even so WE—the *brethren*—shall be BORN AGAIN as sons of GOD, through the RESURRECTION of the dead, BY His Spirit that dwells in us!

We, IF God’s Spirit is in us, are children of God, and HEIRS. Not yet inheritors—but HEIRS to INHERIT, *when* we are born of God by the resurrection, even the GLORY which Christ now has. We shall be GLORIFIED together (verse 17). The whole creation groans, waiting for the actual manifestation of the SONS OF GOD, when we shall be resurrected to GLORY (verses 18-19). We are waiting for the redemption of our body—by the resurrection (verse 23).

Yes BY THE RESURRECTION, we are to be conformed to the IMAGE (spiritual image) of God’s Son Christ, who was the FIRST so born, by the resurrection, of MANY BRETHREN (verse 29). “It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is RISEN AGAIN” (verse 34).

Yes, this chapter is talking of the RESURRECTION, *by* God’s Holy Spirit which dwells in us! That is the theme. Christ was the FIRSTBORN OF MANY BRETHREN, through the RESURRECTION. It is plain!

BORN by Resurrection

Now notice other Scriptures.

Speaking of Christ, “who is the image of the invisible God, the FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE” (Col. 1:15).

Now notice a PLAIN STATEMENT that it is speaking of Christ being the firstborn *from the dead*, by the RESURRECTION:

“And He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD; that in all things He might have preeminence” (Col. 1:18).

THERE IT IS! Read it with your own eyes, in your own Bible. Christ is HEAD of the Church—the FIRST of the brethren in the CHURCH to be born from the dead.

Are you willing to BELIEVE that Scripture? Are you willing to realize that the teaching that being born again means conversion from sin is FALSE teaching? When we are converted, our sins forgiven, we receive the Holy Spirit, we are then BEGOTTEN of God—not yet BORN of God. If this has taken place—if we have been converted, *begotten*, we are, truly, already SONS of God (1 John 3:2) but what we SHALL be, when BORN of God, does not yet appear—for then WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM—like Christ in His resurrected glorified body!

Now turn to the “resurrection chapter”—I Corinthians 15:

“If in THIS LIFE ONLY we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (verse 19). That is, if merely being converted in this life—being forgiven—placed under grace—is all the hope we have—if THAT is all there is to it—if there is not to be the RESURRECTION to the *life to come*, then we are of all men most miserable. If “being born again” takes place in THIS life, then we have no hope for the ETERNAL life to come!

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (verse 20). That is, Christ has been born AGAIN—born to a second LIFE—*eternal life*, becoming the FIRST of many brethren to be so born. He is the FIRST of those who have died to be resurrected—that is, BORN—to a new and future LIFE.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming” (verses 22-23). Christ was the FIRST to be BORN AGAIN—born from the DEAD. Afterward—at His coming—they that are Christ’s—the many BRETHREN—shall be BORN AGAIN from the dead, just as Christ was.

These Scriptures are PLAIN. They make PLAIN the fact, and the TRUTH that being “born again” is NOT the experience of conversion from sin during this life—but being BORN OF GOD, immortal, BY the resurrection.

That does not in any way nullify the experience of conversion in *this* life. It simply means that millions have been deceived into calling that experience by the WRONG NAME. It is a begettal, not a birth. Each of us was BEGOTTEN in our mother’s womb before he was, later, BORN.

Now notice Acts 26:23: “That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the FIRST that should rise from the dead.” There it is again. Christ the FIRSTFRUITS—Christ the FIRSTBORN of many brethren—the FIRST to be BORN by the RESURRECTION from the dead!

These are plain statements of Scripture—plain statements from GOD. They do NOT say—and *I do not say*—that Christ was a sinner who needed salvation. If false prophets reply to this, as they did to the article of a year ago, they will not hesitate to deliberately lie and misrepresent, and send out a barrage of tracts, pamphlets and articles saying that I have said, in this article, that Christ needed salvation. They have accused me of this before.

What these plain statements from God’s Holy Word do say, is that being BORN AGAIN is *not* that experience of conversion from sin in this life—it is NOT anything any human has experienced in this life—it is a NEW birth to a NEW life, by a RESURRECTION. However, it is also true that no one will be BORN AGAIN—born of God to the new IMMORTAL life—*unless* he repents of sin, believes on Christ and accepts Him as personal Saviour, receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then is LED BY the Spirit of God. But THIS experience is NOT a “born-again” experience—it is a BEGETTAL!

Are *YOU*, now, willing to believe God’s TRUTH? It is so infinitely more precious and glorious than Satan’s counterfeits with which he has deceived so many of our readers.