



Being a Christian Part 1

Jesus Christ didn't come to make bad people good. He came to make dead people alive. Until people are made alive then it doesn't matter how good or bad a person is; they are not Christian! Back in the Old Testament God's people were given the Ten Commandments. The trouble with laws and rules is that they can become more important than God Himself. Israel fell into that trap. When the very God who gave them those commandments lived among them most preferred to stay with rules and regulations rather than accept their Messiah, their God in human form. One such believer in the law was Nicodemus. He was one of the top church leaders at the time of Jesus Christ. He followed the law but recognised that the miracles Jesus did showed that God was in Jesus. Knowing that most of his fellow church leaders viewed Jesus with suspicion and not wanting it known that he had talked to Jesus Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. He asked Jesus the paradox he could see. How could someone not concentrate on the law yet still have God with him? Jesus obviously didn't follow all the traditions and rules laid down by the church leaders but healings and miracles were going on all around Him. Surely to be right with God you had to be obeying all the rules the church laid down. Nicodemus came to Jesus and raised this question but the reply Jesus gave rocked him, "You must be born again." Nicodemus got stuck on the natural claiming it to be an impossibility. No adult could physically be born again. Jesus explained; the second birth is spiritual. Man is alive in a natural sense when he is born physically, but it is absolutely necessary for a person to be born spiritually too. In fact a person had to be born spiritually to even be able to see the Kingdom of God.

Jesus went on to say that when a person was born of the Spirit of God they acted differently, they based their lives on different values, and they had different ambitions.

Jesus described the spirit life of a born again person as being like the wind. No one was ever sure of neither where they were neither coming from nor where they were going to.

St Paul talks about this in Romans 8 v1-11 where he says that a natural (carnal) man thinks only of natural things whereas one who is spiritual thinks of spiritual things. Then, in verse 6 he adds, "*For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace.*" So trying to serve God by doing this or that does no good whatsoever, in fact no one can please God that way.

So what is the spiritual birth? It is having the spirit of Jesus Christ living in you. Verse 9 says, "*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*" Verse 11 adds that if the spirit of God is in you then the same power that raised Jesus from death will raise you up too.

This is being born again. A new life, God's Holy Spirit lives in a believer's body. It makes them a new person.

There is a verse often misunderstood. Psalm 37 v4 says, "*Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*" The natural mind thinks that God will give them everything they want, the spiritual thinks that God will give them the desires themselves, right desires. And if we only desire the things God places in our hearts how can we sin?

Being a Christian then means being born again, not doing right things. It means you cannot make the grade yourself, but God can make you a new person who will be led by God's Spirit to live the way God wants you to.