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What Does It Mean to Be “Born Again”?

It is apparent that the early Latin church fathers made a deliberate alteration of the text in John 3:5 that, to this day, has obscured the true meaning of the phrase “born again.” This alteration has remained a part of the Latin Vulgate and is the basis of the Catholic doctrine of the “sacrament of baptism.” During the Reformation, Protestants rejected the Catholic sacrament and developed a slightly different doctrine regarding “born again.” The teachings of what it means to be “born again” and “born of God” are perhaps some of the most misunderstood teachings of the New Testament. Tragically, this has resulted in millions of false conversions.

The Catholic sacrament of baptism evolved into a religious work while various Protestant versions led to a perverted, lawless grace that rejects Jesus’ teachings that a Christian is required to keep the commandments of God. Compounding these doctrinal errors is the unscriptural belief in the immortality of the soul and the practice of infant baptism.

There is no scriptural example of infants or children being baptized. Jesus Christ was not “christened” nor was He baptized when he was a baby; in fact, He was not baptized until He was thirty years old. Neither do the New Testament accounts show that John the Baptist or the apostles baptized infants or children. The New Testament teaches that when one repents of his or her sins to God the Father and by faith accepts the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, one must be baptized by full immersion in water (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:35-36; Rom 3:23-25; 4:7-8, 24-25; 5:9-10; 6:1-6). Repentance and baptism are decisions and commitments that only an adult can make. The true New Testament teachings of what it means to be born again and born of God differ entirely from Catholic or Protestant beliefs.

The Babylonian Pagan Origin of a Counterfeit “Born Again” Doctrine

In his epoch book, *The Two Babylons*, Alexander Hislop conclusively demonstrates that pagan religions, which had their roots in ancient Babylon, had a counterfeit belief and practice of being born again, or “twice born.” Hislop wrote: “The Brahmins make it their distinguishing boast that they are ‘twice-born’ men, and that, as such, they are sure of eternal happiness. Now, the same was the case in [ancient] Babylon, and there **the new birth was conferred by baptism**. In the Chaldean mysteries, before any instruction could be received, it was required first of all, that **the person to be initiated** [into the mysteries] **submit to baptism in token of blind and implicit obedience**” (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 132, bold emphasis added).

When God scattered the people from the tower of Babel, disbursing them throughout the world, they took with them their idolatrous pagan religion. Instead of worshiping the true God, they continued to worship Nimrod and Semiramis and their son Tammuz. However, because God confused mankind’s language into many languages, these false deities took many names. Regardless of their various names in ancient and even modern languages, they are these three pagan deities: Nimrod—the father god, Semiramis—the mother goddess, and Tammuz—the son and false savior. The spiritual power behind these human deities is none other than Satan the devil, who deceives the whole world (Rev. 12:9).

In the ancient Chaldean mystery religion there was a perverted myth connected with the flood of Noah about being twice-born. The pagan priests twisted the truth to fit their religious beliefs as Hislop notes: “Whatever primitive truth the Chaldean priests held, they utterly perverted and corrupted it. They willingly overlooked the fact that it was ‘the right-

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eousness of the faith' which Noah 'had *before*' the flood that carried him safely through the avenging waters of that dread catastrophe and ushered him, as it were, from the womb of the ark, by a new birth, into a new world, when on the ark resting on Mount Ararat, he was released from his long confinement. They led their votaries to believe that, if they only passed through the **baptismal waters**, and the penances therewith connected, that of itself would make them like the second father of mankind, 'Diphueis,' '**twice-born**,' or '**regenerate**,' [and] would entitle them to all the privileges of 'righteous' Noah, and give them that '**new birth**'... which their consciences told them they so much needed. The Papacy acts on precisely the same principle; and from this very source has its doctrine of baptismal regeneration been derived, about which so much has been written and so many controversies been waged. Let men contend as they may, **this, and this only, will be found to be the real origin of the anti-Scriptural dogma**" (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 137, bold emphasis added).

Infant Baptism: With the scattering of the people from the tower of Babel, the Babylonian religion was spread around the world. Consequently, it is no surprise that infant baptism was practiced in Mexico thousands of years before the Spanish conquest. When the Spanish invaded Mexico, they were stunned at observing an infant baptism that mirrored the Catholic ritual. Hislop explains: "The same doctrine of baptismal regeneration [as the Babylonian Mysteries and Catholic practice] was found in full vigour among the natives, when Cortez and his warriors landed on their shores. The ceremony of Mexican baptism, which was beheld with astonishment by the Spanish Roman Catholic missionaries, is thus strikingly described in Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*: 'When everything necessary for the baptism had been made ready, all the relations of the child were assembled, and the midwife, who was the person that performed the rite of baptism, was summoned. At early dawn [showing sun worship derived from ancient Babylon and Egypt], they met together in the courtyard of the house. When the sun had risen, the midwife, taking the child in her arms, called for a little earthen vessel of water, while those about her placed the ornaments, which had been prepared for baptism, in the midst of the court. To perform the rite of baptism, she placed herself with her face toward the west [the infant facing east], and immediately began to go through certain ceremonies ... After this she sprinkled water on the head of the infant, saying, "O my child, take and receive the water of the Lord of the world [who is Satan the devil II Cor. 4:4], which is our life, which is given for the increasing and renewing of our body. It is to wash and to purify. I pray that these heavenly drops may enter into your body, and dwell there; that they may destroy and remove from you all the evil and sin which was given you before the beginning of the world, since all of us are under its power" ... She then washed the body of the child with water, and spoke in this manner: "Whencesoever thou comest, thou [the evil spirit] that art hurtful to this child, leave him and depart from him, for he now liveth anew, and is BORN ANEW; now he is purified and cleansed afresh, and our mother Chalchivitlycue [the goddess of water] bringeth him into the world." Having thus prayed, the midwife took the child in both hands, and, lifting him towards heaven [with the infant facing the rising sun] said, "O Lord, thou seest here thy creature, whom thou hast sent into the world, this place of sorrow, suffering, and penitence. Grant him, O Lord, thy gifts and inspiration, for thou art the Great God, and with thee is the great goddess." ' Here is the opus operatum without mistake. Here is baptismal regeneration and exorcism too, as thorough and complete as any Romish priest or lover of Tractarianism could desire" (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 133, bold emphasis added).

In ancient Greece, the pagan Athenians made their baptismal waters holy by plunging a flaming torch, symbolizing the power of the sun god, into the water used for baptism. Likewise, the baptismal waters used in Romish baptisms are made holy by plunging a flaming torch into the water. Referring to Catholic justification of such practices, Hislop wrote: "Of what avail is it for Bishop Hay to say, with the view of sanctifying superstition and 'making apostasy plausible,' that this is done 'to represent the fire of Divine love, which is communicated to the soul by baptism and the light of good example, which all who are bap-

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tised ought to give.’ This is the fair face put on the matter; but the fact still remains [sic] that while the Romish doctrines in regard to baptism is purely Pagan, in the ceremonies connected with the Papal baptism one of the essential rites of the ancient fire-worship is still practiced at this day, just as it was practised by the worshippers of Bacchus, the Babylonian Messiah. As Rome keeps up the remembrance of the fire-god passing through the waters and giving virtue to them, so when it speaks of the ‘Holy Ghost *suffering* for us in baptism,’ it in like manner commemorates the part which Paganism assigned to the Babylonian goddess when she plunged into the waters. The sorrows of Nimrod, or Bacchus, when in the waters were meritorious sorrows. The sorrows of his wife, in whom the Holy Ghost miraculously dwelt, were the same. The sorrows of the Madonna, then when in these waters, fleeing from Typhon’s rage, were the birth-throes by which children were born to God [born again by water]. And thus, even in the Far West, Chalchivitycue, the Mexican ‘**goddess of the waters, and ‘mother’ of all the regenerate, was represented as purging the newborn infant from original sin, and ‘bringing it anew into the world.’** Now, the Holy Ghost was idolatrously worshipped in Babylon under the form of a ‘Dove.’ Under the same form, and with equal idolatry, the Holy Ghost is worshipped in Rome. When, therefore, we read, in opposition to every Scripture principle, that ‘*the Holy Ghost suffered for us in baptism,*’ surely it must now be manifest who is that Holy Ghost that is really intended. It is no other than Semiramis, the very incarnation of lust and all uncleanness.

“The reader has seen already how faithfully Rome has copied the Pagan exorcism [of evil spirits] in connection with baptism. All the other peculiarities attending the Romish baptism, such as the use of salt, spittle, chrism, or anointing with oil, and marking the forehead with the sign of the cross, are equally Pagan. Some of the continental advocates of Rome have admitted that some of these at least have not been derived from Scripture” (Ibid., pp. 137-138, 143-144). Hence, the doctrine and practice of infant baptism originated in ancient Babylon, and the belief that one is born again of water by baptism is derived from heathen paganism.

How did these antiscritptural, heathen, pagan practices become part of Christendom?

The Gnostic Connection, the Great Apostasy and the Early Latin Church Fathers

Jesus Christ repeatedly warned the apostles and believers about false Christs, false apostles and false teachers who would come and if possible deceive the very elect (Matt. 24:5, 11, 15, 24; see parallel accounts in Mark and Luke). The apostles likewise warned the brethren to be on guard against false apostles and teachers (II Cor. 4; 11; I and II Timothy; Titus 1; II Pet. 2; I, II and III John; Jude; Rev. 2, 3, 13 and 17). The New Testament is replete with warnings against false apostles and teachers who would come in “sheep’s clothing” but inwardly would be “ravening wolves,” seeking to pervert and destroy the truth.

Paul warned the Thessalonians in 51 AD that this apostate system, which he called the “mystery of lawlessness,” was beginning to penetrate the Church. He forewarned that some were writing counterfeit epistles in his name. Furthermore, he prophesied that this apostate system would grow and continue until the final antichrist would arise, whom Jesus would destroy at His second coming: “Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken in mind, nor be troubled—neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle, as if from us, *saying* that the day of Christ is present.

“Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because *that day will not* come unless **the apostasy shall come first**, and the man of sin shall be revealed—the son of perdition, the one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? And now you understand what is holding *him* back in order for him to be revealed in his own

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set time.

“**For the mystery of lawlessness is already working**; only *there is* one Who is restraining at the present *time* until it arises out of *the* midst. And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of His coming); *even the one whose coming is according to the inner working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders*, and with every deceit of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved. And for this cause, God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe *the* lie; so that all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but who took pleasure in unrighteousness” (II Thes. 2:1-12, bold emphasis added).

Thus, Satan the devil inspired his ministers of iniquity to develop a great apostate “Christianity” that Jesus Christ also identified as “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:5-6). They preached a false Christ, propagated false doctrines, wrote false letters, and even falsified and altered the holy Scriptures of God (II Pet. 3:16) in order to promulgate their pagan Babylonian teachings. The early leaders of this neo-gnostic Christianized apostate church established many false teachings, among them the doctrine of being born again, which is the focus of this appendix.

The Latin Vulgate: When examining John 3:3-5 in the Latin Vulgate Bible—originally translated by Jerome in 383 AD—one finds a deliberate insertion of the word “again” into Verse 5, making it read “born **again** of water.” No Greek manuscript has the word “again” added to the phrase “born of water.” What follows is the Latin Vulgate with an English translation. Note that the Latin syntax must be reordered into English syntax most of the time and punctuation added:

3. *Respondit Iesus et dixit ei amen amen dico tibi nisi quis **natus** fuerit **denuo** non potest videre regnum Dei*

3. Jesus responded and said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you unless anyone be **born anew**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4. *Dicit ad eum Nicodemus quomodo potest homo **nasci** cum senex sit numquid potest in ventrem matris suae iterato introire et **nasci***

4. Nicodemus says to him, “How can a man be **born already** being old? Can he enter into his own mother’s belly again and be **born**?”

5. *Respondit Iesus amen amen dico tibi nisi quis **renatus** fuerit **ex aqua** et Spiritu non potest introire in regnum Dei*

5. Jesus answered, “Amen, amen, I say to you unless one is **reborn [born again] of water** and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

In Verse 3 the Latin *natus* means “born” and *denuo* means “anew” or “again.” But, *denuo* is not found in Verse 5, which reads differently. Instead, the prefix *re* has been added to *natus*, making it read *renatus*, which means “reborn” or “born again.” This addition makes the phrase read, “born **again** of water and Spirit.” This phrase is not found in any of the Greek manuscripts, which universally read: γεννηθη εξ υδοτος και πνευματος, correctly translated, “born of water and of spirit.” Moreover, the Greek word *ανωθεν* *anōthen* “again” or “anew,” found in the Greek text in Verse 3, is not found in Verse 5.

Since the Greek word *ανωθεν* *anōthen* does not appear in Verse 5 in any Greek manuscript, the Latin text is not an accurate translation from the Greek. Also, the addition of the prefix *re* to *natus* changes the entire meaning of Verse 5. It is likely that these changes were made in order to substantiate the mistaken belief that when one is baptized, one is “**reborn** of water,” or “born **again** of water.” From this doctrine the practice of infant baptism was developed.

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Coverdale’s Latin and English New Testament: In 1538, Miles Coverdale published a side-by-side Latin Vulgate and English version of the New Testament. The Latin Vulgate he used in his day is different from the Latin Vulgate of today. The following is John 3:3-5 in Coverdale’s Latin Vulgate and his English translation printed in Southwarke, England by James Nicolson in 1538:

3. *Respondit IESVS, et dixit ei: amen amen dico tibi nisi quis **renatus** fuerit **denuo** non potest uidere regnum Dei*

3. Jesus answered, and said unto him: “Verily, verily I say unto you, without [unless] a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4. *Dicit ad eum Nicodemus: quomodo potest homo **renasci** cum sit senex nunquid potest in uetrem matris suae iterato introire & **renasci***

4. Nicodemus says to him, “How can a man be **reborn** *already* being old? Can he enter into his own mother's belly again and be **reborn**?”

5. *Respondit IESVS: amen amen dico tibi nisi quis **renatus** fuerit **ex aqua** et Spiritu non potest introire in regnum Dei*

5. Jesus answered: “Verily, verily I say unto you, without [unless] a man be **born again of water** and the holy ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

From Coverdale’s Latin-English version, it is clear that the Latin Vulgate of his day had *renatus* and *renasci*, making it read “reborn” or “born again” in Verses 3, 4 and 5. Likewise, he translated the Latin *renatus* and *renasci* as “born again” in Verses 3, 4 and 5 in his English rendition; whereas, today’s Latin Vulgate has *renatus* only in Verse 5. Therefore, all the evidence from the Latin Vulgate and the English translations makes it apparent that John 3:3, 4 and 5 was altered to support the false doctrine that one is born again at baptism.

Erasmus’ Greek-Latin Version of 1535: With his final version of the Greek Text, Erasmo Roterodamo (Erasmus of Rotterdam) translated the Byzantine Greek into Latin. His purpose was to provide a new uncorrupted Latin version of the New Testament. In his translation, he did not incorporate the mistranslations and deliberate errors of the Latin Vulgate into his Latin translation. Erasmus’ Latin translation from the Greek, with an English translation provided, is as follows:

3. *Respondit Iesus, et dixit ei amen ame dico tibi nisi quis **natus** fuerit **esupernis** non potest videre regnum Dei*

3. Jesus responded and said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you unless anyone be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4. *Dicit ad eum Nicodemus: Quomodo potest homo **nasci** cum sit senex? Num potest in uentrem matris suae iterato introire, ac **nasci**?*

4. Nicodemus says to him, “How can a man be **born** *already* being old? Can he enter into his mother’s womb again and be **born**?”

5. *Respondit Iesus amen amen dico tibi nisi quis **natus** fuerit **ex aqua** et Spiritu non potest introire in regnum Dei*

5. Jesus answered, “Amen, amen, I say to you unless one is **born of water** and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Erasmus’ Latin translation from the Greek is correct. In Verse 5, he translated the Greek word γεννηθη *gennethe* as *natus*, “born” of water, not as the Vulgate *renatus*, “born again” of water. Erasmus’ translation reveals that the Latin Vulgate was deliberately corrupted.

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How Did It All Begin?

How did the false interpretation and teaching of John 3:5 develop into a deliberate mistranslation as found in the Latin Vulgate? The seeds of this teaching are rooted in one of the heresies that the apostle Paul had to address when he wrote to the Corinthians in 56 AD. Some within the Corinthian congregations were claiming that there was no resurrection of the dead, reflecting the pagan belief in the immortality of the soul. To counter this outrageous claim, Paul wrote: **“But if Christ is being preached, that He rose from *the* dead, how is it that some among you are saying that there is no resurrection of *the* dead? For if there is no resurrection from *the* dead, neither has Christ been raised.** And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching *is* in vain, and your faith *is* also in vain. And we are also found *to be* false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised Christ, Whom He did not raise, if indeed *the* dead are not raised.

“For if *the* dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. But if Christ has not been raised, your faith *is* vain; you are still in your sins, and those who have fallen asleep in Christ have then perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most miserable. But now Christ has been raised from *the* dead; He has become the firstfruit of those who have fallen asleep” (I Cor. 15:12-20).

The apostles were witnesses that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead, which is the whole foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the Old and New Testaments teach about a resurrection of the dead, which will take place when Jesus Christ returns and establishes the kingdom of God on earth. At that time, the resurrected saints will reign with Him as kings and priests (Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6).

While rejecting the truth of the resurrection of the dead, false teachers assumed the Babylonian antiscritptural belief in the immortality of the soul. To this day, many, if not most, within Christendom are taught that at death the soul goes to heaven for doing good or to purgatory or hell for committing various degrees of evil.

The Bible does not teach the immortality of the soul; rather, it reveals, “The soul that sins, it shall die” (Ezk. 18:4, 20). Neither does the Bible teach that when one dies, the soul goes to heaven or hell. Rather, it clearly shows that when one dies, he or she awaits the resurrection of the dead—both of the righteous and the wicked (Dan. 12:2; John 5:25-29; I Cor. 15; Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8).

The belief in the immortality of the soul fueled the doctrine of infant baptism, for if an infant were to die what would happen to its soul? Therefore, this belief necessitated baptism or christening to remove the “stain of original sin” so that if the infant died, its soul would go to heaven; if the infant lived to adulthood, salvation and heaven was assured. From *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, there is this entry on infant baptism: “Although from the first, baptism was the universal means of entry into the Christian community, the NT contains no specific authority for its administration to infants. But by a tradition at least as old as the 3rd cent., and virtually universal until the Reformation, children born to Christian parents have been baptized in infancy. In the 16th cent. this practice (pseudobaptism) was rejected by the Anabaptists and since the early 17th cent. also by the Baptists and later by the Disciples of Christ.

“Ireneaus (*Haer.*, ii. 33) speaks of Christ as ‘giving salvation to those of every age’... who are ‘regenerated’ ... through Him, and expressly includes ‘infants and little children’ ... among these. Explicit statements concerning infant baptism are made by Origen, who refers to it as an established custom, which the Church has received from the Apostles (*Hom. In Lev.*, viii. 4, *Comm. in Rom.*, v. 9). In both passages he finds the practice justified by the need which infants, no less than adults, have for liberation from original sin. Opposition to infant baptism (implying the prior existence of the practice) is voiced by Tertullian, who urges (*De Bapt.*, 18) that the baptism of children be deferred (despite Mt. 19. 14) until they can ‘know Christ’. This advocacy of delaying baptism for infants, as well as spiritually immature adults, appears to spring from Tertullian’s ideas of the impossibility or great diffi-

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culty of the remission of post-baptismal sin. Such considerations led to a widespread deferment of baptism in the 4th cent., e.g. in the cases of Constantine and of St. Augustine.... On the other hand, by the middle of the 3rd cent. infant baptism was regularly performed, as is attested by Cyprian (*Ep.* 64), where it is stated to convey remission not only of actual sins but also of original sin. From then onwards evidence for the practice is ample” (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 701).

“In defending the propriety of Infant Baptism against the Pelagians, he [Augustine] also maintained that one of the chief effects of the Sacrament was the removal of the stain of Original Sin on the soul which bars even the new-born child from the Kingdom of Heaven [i.e., its immortal soul going to heaven], thereby developing earlier teaching from NT times, acc. to which the remission of Actual Sins, the infusion of grace, and the incorporation into the Church had been generally recognized as results of Baptism” (*Ibid.*, p. 127).

Quotations from the Early Latin Church Fathers

In rejecting the simultaneity of the resurrection of the dead and being born again and accepting the belief in the immortality of the soul, the early Latin Church fathers thus changed the meaning of when one is born again to apply to one’s baptism. The following statements reveal that this false doctrine was formalized within fifty years after the apostolic age ended with the death of John in 98-100 AD.

St. Justin Martyr (inter 148-155 AD): “Whoever is convinced and believes that what they are taught and told by us is the truth, and professes to be able to live accordingly, is instructed to pray and to beseech God in fasting for the remission of their former sins, while we pray and fast with them. Then they are led by us to a place where there is water; and there they are reborn in the same kind of rebirth in which we ourselves were reborn: In the name of God, the Lord and Father of all, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they receive the washing with water. For Christ said, ‘**Unless you be reborn**, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ ... The reason for doing this, we have learned from the Apostles” (*The First Apology* 61). Since the apostles of Jesus Christ never taught infant baptism, they never learned it from them. It is more likely that they were taught it by various false apostles, who were active even during Paul’s ministry (II Cor. 11:13-15).

St. Irenaeus (c. 190 AD): “And [Naaman] dipped himself ... seven times in the Jordan” [2 Kings 5:14]. It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [this served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the **sacred water** and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions, being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: ‘Except a man be **born again [renatus] through water** and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (*Fragment* 34).

Recognitions of Clement (c. 221 AD): “But you will perhaps say, ‘What does the baptism of water contribute toward the worship of God?’ In the first place, because that which has pleased God is fulfilled. In the second place, because when you are **regenerated and born again of water** and of God, the frailty of your former birth, which you have through men, is cut off, and so ... you shall be able to attain salvation; but otherwise it is impossible. For thus has the true Prophet [Jesus] testified to us with an oath: “Verily, I say to you, that unless a man is **born again [renatus] of water** ... he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” ’ ” (*Recognitions* 6:9).

St. Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200-258 AD): “But afterwards, when the stain of my past life had been **washed away by means of the water of re-birth**, a light from above poured itself upon my chastened and now pure heart; afterwards through the Spirit which is breathed from heaven, **a second birth made of me a new man**.... Thus it had to be acknowledged that what was of the earth and was born of the flesh and had lived submissive to sins, had now begun to be of God, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit was animating it. (*To*

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“[When] they receive also the Baptism of the Church ... then finally can they be fully sanctified and be the sons of God ... since it is written, ‘Except a man be **born again** [*renatus*] **of water** and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God’ ” (*Letters* 71 [72]:1).

Seventh Council of Carthage (c. 256 AD): “And in the gospel our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with his divine voice, saying, ‘Except a man be **born again** [*renatus*] **of water** and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ ...Unless therefore they receive saving Baptism in the Catholic Church, which is one, they cannot be saved, but will be condemned with the carnal in the judgment of the Lord Christ.”

St. Ambrose of Milan (c. 333-397 AD): “The Church was redeemed at the price of Christ's blood. Jew or Greek, it makes no difference; but if he has believed, he must circumcise himself from his sins [in Baptism—Col. 2:11-13] so that he can be saved ... for no one ascends into the kingdom of heaven except through the sacrament of Baptism.... ‘Unless a man be **born again** [*renatus*] **of water** and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ (*On Abraham* 2:11:79, 84)” (*This Rock* magazine, excerpts from August 1992 and October 1994).

From these quotes it is evident that the early Latin Church fathers had a corrupted Latin translation with the altered text of John 3:5, reading *renatus* instead of *natus*. Later, Jerome, who translated the Scriptures into Latin (383 AD), also retained the altered version of *renatus* and *renasci* in verses 3, 4 and 5, as evidenced by the Latin Vulgate of Coverdale's day—1538 AD.

A Comparison of Other Early English Translations of John 3:3, 5

William Tyndale, a Bible scholar and the first man to translate the New Testament from the Greek into English, translated John 3:3, 5 correctly. However, in his other writings, he taught that when one is converted and receives the Holy Spirit, one has been born again. Perhaps he carried this misunderstanding from the Latin Vulgate into his theology, while rendering the correct translation of “born again” and “born anew” in John 3.

Tyndale rendered the Greek words *γεννω ανωθεν* *gennao anothen* in John 3:3 as “born from above” and “born anew.” The Greek word *γεννω* *gennao* means: Of a man, “to beget, to become a father”; of a woman, “to conceive, to bear.” In some cases, according to the context, *gennao* does mean “born.” However, *gennao* predominantly means “begotten” rather than “born.” The Greek word *anothen*, means: “from above, again, anew” (Arndt & Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

From *The English Hexapla* (1841) we can compare Tyndale's translation of the critical verses in John 3 with five other English translations. It is evident that other translators also had problems interpreting *gennao* and *gennao anothen*. The following four versions were translated into English from the Greek text:

- 1) Tyndale 1534: “born anew,” verse 3; “born again,” verses 4, 7; “born,” verses 4, 5, and 6.
- 2) Great Bible, Cramner 1539: “born from above,” verses 3, 7; “born again,” verse 4; “born,” verses 4, 5, and 6.
- 3) Geneva 1557: “begotten again,” verses 3, 7; “begotten,” verses 4, 5 and 6.
- 4) KJV 1611: “born again,” verses 3, 7; “born,” verses 4, 5 and 6.

The translators of the 1557 Geneva Bible translated *gennao* as “begotten.” In many instances, “begotten” is a correct translation of *gennao*. However, in John 3 “begotten” is an **incorrect** rendering. The translators of the 1599 Geneva Bible corrected this error to make it read “born” instead of “begotten.”

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The following two versions were translated from the Latin Vulgate into English:

1) Wycliffe 1380: “born again,” verses 3, 7; “born” verses, 4, 6, and 7; “born **again** of water,” verse 5.

2) Rheims 1582: “born again,” verses 3, 7; “born,” verses, 4, 6, and 7; “born **again** of water,” verse 5.

It is reported that it was Wycliffe who coined the English phrase “born again,” but both Wycliffe and the translators of the Rheims version used the Latin Vulgate for their English versions.

The True Scriptural Meaning of “Born Again”

In order to fully comprehend the true Scriptural meaning of when one is born again, Jesus’ teachings in John 3:1-12 must be examined. The context of these verses proves that being born again does not mean a conversion or baptismal experience. Rather, it means a literal transformation from flesh to spirit: “Now there was a man of the Pharisees, Nicodemus by name, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher Who has come from God; because no one is able to do the miracles that You are doing, unless God is with him.’

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, **unless anyone is born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man who is old be born? Can he enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, **unless anyone has been born of water and of Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which has been **born of the flesh is flesh**; and that which has been **born of the Spirit is spirit**. Do not be amazed that I said to you, “It is necessary for you to be born again.” **The wind blows where it will**, and you hear its sound, but you do not know *the place* from which it comes and *the place* to which it goes; **so also is everyone who has been born of the Spirit.**’ ”

“Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘You are a teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things? Truly, truly I say to you, We speak that which We know, and We testify of that which We have seen; but you do not receive Our testimony. If I have told you earthly things, and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?’ ” (John 3:1-12).

It is clear that Jesus was not talking about a conversion or baptismal experience in this dialogue. Rather, he was comparing one’s physical birth—a fleshly existence—to that of being born anew or born again—an actual spiritual existence. Jesus describes two births: one of water and one of the spirit, “unless a man has been **born of water and of Spirit ...**” Next, Jesus shows the comparison between a birth of flesh and a birth of the spirit: “That which has been **born of the flesh is flesh**; and that which has been **born of the Spirit is spirit.**”

Physical Birth: When a human being is born, he or she is born of flesh—a physical being. Further, every human being has been “born of water” from the womb. **The one that has been born of water has been born of the flesh and is flesh.**

Spiritual Birth: Nicodemus missed the point when Jesus referred to a new or second birth of the Spirit: “**unless a man has been born ... of Spirit.**” What kind of existence does one have who has been born of the Spirit? Jesus answered that question when He said, “... that which has been **born of the Spirit is spirit.**” Jesus clearly meant that anyone who has been born of the Spirit is, in fact, a spirit being. The new, spiritual birth means that one who has been born again is a spirit being, no longer composed of human flesh. Since one who “has been born of the flesh is flesh,” then it follows, as Jesus said, “that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Every human is limited by fleshly existence and physical environment. However, as a spirit being, one is not bound by the flesh or limited by the physical realm. Jesus stated

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that one who “has been born of the Spirit” cannot necessarily be seen, just as the wind cannot be seen: “**The wind blows where it wills**, and you hear its sound, but you do not know the *place* from which it comes and *the place* to which it goes; **so also is everyone who has been born of the Spirit**” (Verse 8). Therefore, one who has been “born again,” “born of the Spirit,” must be invisible to the human eye, having the ability to come and go as the wind. That is hardly the case of one who has been baptized and converted; he or she is still in the flesh and is limited by the flesh—subject to death. Jesus said that a fleshly human being “cannot see” or “enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:3, 5). Paul reiterated this when he emphatically stated: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* kingdom of God” (I Cor. 15:50).

When Is One Actually Born Again? Since one is not born again at baptism or conversion, when is one literally born again, or born anew? It is through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the New Testament reveals when a person is born again. Matthew wrote that Jesus was the “firstborn” of the Virgin Mary (Matt. 1:25). Jesus’ human birth was by water. He was flesh (I John 4:1-2) as any other human being, but He was “God manifested in the flesh” (I Tim. 3:16).

When Jesus was resurrected from the dead by the glory of the Father, He was the “firstborn from the dead.” Therefore, Jesus was born again—born of the Spirit—at the time He was resurrected from the dead, exactly as He told Nicodemus, “That which has been born of the Spirit is spirit.”

The apostle Paul clearly showed that Jesus was born again when he wrote: “Because by Him were all things created, the things in heaven and the things on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things subsist. And He is the Head of the body, the church; **Who is the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead**, so that in all things He Himself might hold the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell” (Col. 1:16-19). The apostle John also verified this when he wrote that **Jesus was “the firstborn from the dead”** (Rev. 1:5).

After His resurrection and ascension to heaven to be accepted by God the Father as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world, Jesus returned to the earth and appeared to the apostles who were assembled together in a room behind closed doors. Since a spirit being is not limited by the physical realm, the resurrected Jesus walked through doors and walls, suddenly appearing to the apostles and disciples: “Afterwards, as evening was drawing near that day, the first *day* of the weeks, and the doors were shut where the disciples had assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace *be* to you.’ And after saying this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced, *because* they had seen the Lord” (John 20:19-20).

As a spirit being, Jesus also had the ability to manifest Himself in human form, which He did when He walked with the two disciples to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31). Furthermore, Jesus was able to restrain their eyes, so they did not realize that it was He, until He broke and blessed the bread. Then He immediately disappeared. This account shows that as one born again—born of the Spirit—Jesus was like the wind, as He had said to Nicodemus. He went where He wanted to go, and no one could see Him, unless He made it possible for them to see Him by manifesting Himself as a man with flesh and bone.

After Jesus disappeared, the two disciples went back to Jerusalem: “And they rose up that very hour *and* returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and those with them assembled together, saying, ‘In truth, the Lord has risen! And He has appeared to Simon.’ Then they related the things that had happened *to them* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

“Now as they were telling these things, **Jesus Himself** [suddenly appearing] **stood in their midst** and said to them, ‘Peace *be* to you.’ But they were terrified and filled with fear, thinking *that* they beheld a spirit [a demon]. Then He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I. Touch

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Me and see *for yourselves*; for a spirit [a demon] does not have flesh and bones, as you see Me having.’ And after saying this, He showed them *His* hands and *His* feet. But while they were still disbelieving and wondering for joy, He said to them, ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ Then they gave Him part of a broiled fish and a *piece* of honeycomb. And He took these *and* ate in their presence” (Luke 24:33-43).

As a divine spirit being, the firstborn from the dead, Jesus was able to manifest Himself as a man. A demon spirit may at times be able to manifest itself as an apparition to human beings, but it is not able to manifest itself with flesh and bone. It is little wonder that the disciples were afraid when Jesus first appeared to them.

What the Glorified Christ Looks Like: When Jesus began to give the apostle John visions for the book of Revelation, He revealed to John how He appeared in His full glory, as a spirit being: “I was in *the* Spirit on the day of the Lord; and I heard a loud voice like a trumpet behind me, saying, ‘**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last**’; and, ‘What you see, write in a book, and send *it* to the churches that *are* in Asia: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.’ And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands; and in *the* midst of the seven lampstands *one* like ***the Son of man***, clothed in *a garment* reaching to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden breastplate. And His head and hair *were* like white wool, white as snow; and His eyes *were* like a flame of fire; and His feet *were* like fine brass, as if *they* glowed in a furnace; and His voice *was* like *the* sound of many waters. And in His right hand He had seven stars, and a sharp two-edged sword went out of His mouth, and His countenance *was* as the sun shining in its *full* power [Matt 17:2]. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead; but He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last, even the one Who is living; for I was dead, and behold, I am alive into the ages of eternity. Amen” (Rev. 1:10-18).

Jesus Christ Is the Firstborn Among Many Brethren to Be Resurrected at His Coming

Not only is Jesus Christ the firstborn from the dead, He is also the “firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29). The true body of believers is called “the church of the firstborn,” as Paul wrote: “But you have come to Mount Sion, and to *the* city of *the* living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; *to the* joyous festival gathering; and to ***the church of the firstborn***, registered *in the book of life* in heaven; and to God, *the* Judge of all” (Heb. 12:22-23). It is called the church of the firstborn because believers will be resurrected, or born again—born of the Spirit—in the first resurrection when Jesus returns (Rev. 20:4-6).

Christ the Firstfruit: Paul wrote that the resurrected Jesus Christ is also called “the firstfruit” of those raised from the dead. Furthermore, he explained that the rest of the true Christians would be resurrected at Jesus’ second coming: “But now Christ has been raised from *the* dead; He has become ***the firstfruit*** of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man *came* death, by man also *came the* resurrection of *the* dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ ***the firstfruit; then, those who are Christ’s at His coming***” (I Cor. 15:20-23).

The apostle James, the brother of the Lord, referred to true Christians as “firstfruits” unto God: “Do not deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren. Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning. According to His own will, He begat us by *the* Word of truth, that ***we might be a kind of firstfruits*** of all His created beings” (Jas. 1:16-18).

Jesus taught His disciples that the harvest of the firstfruits would be at the end of the age when He returns, as He explained in the parable of the wheat and tares: “And He answered *and* said to them, ‘The one Who sows the good seed is the Son of man; ***and the field***

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is the world; and the good seed, these are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*. Now the enemy who sowed them is the devil; and **the harvest is *the end of the age***, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore, as the tares are gathered and consumed in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all the offenders and those who are practicing lawlessness; and they shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun** [glorified spirit beings, who are born again of the Spirit at the first resurrection] in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:37-43).

From these scriptures it is clear that one’s soul does not go to heaven, purgatory or hell when one dies but after death awaits the resurrection. No one has ascended to heaven except Jesus (John 3:13; Acts 2:22-24), Who is at the right hand of God the Father to intercede as High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16; I John 2:1-2). At the appointed time Jesus Christ will return to the earth, and the resurrection of the saints will occur at His coming.

Because some in Corinth claimed that there was no resurrection from the dead, the apostle Paul wrote in great detail about it. He presented overwhelming evidence of the resurrection and proved the souls of dead people do not go to heaven, purgatory or hell when they die: “Nevertheless, someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised? And with what body do they come?’ Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow *is* not the body that shall be; rather, *it is* bare grain—it may be of wheat, or one of the other *grains*; and God gives it a body according to His will, and to each of the seeds its own body.

“*Likewise*, not all flesh *is* the same flesh. Rather, *there is* one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another of fish, and another of birds. And *there are* heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies; but the glory of *the* heavenly *is* different, and the *glory* of the earthly *is* different. *There is* one glory of *the* sun, and another glory of *the* moon, and another glory of *the* stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory. So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

“It is sown **a natural body** [that which has been born of the flesh is flesh]; it is raised **a spiritual body** [that which has been born of the spirit is spirit]. **There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body;** accordingly, it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam *became* an ever-living Spirit.’ However, **the spiritual was not first, but the natural—then the spiritual**” (I Cor. 15:35-46).

These scriptures reveal that at the resurrection one will be born again of the spirit and receive a glorious spirit body, shining as the sun. Paul continued his explanation of the resurrection of the dead in verses 47-55: “The first man *is* of the earth—made of dust. The second man *is* the Lord from heaven. As *is* the one made of dust, so also *are all* those who are made of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *one*, so also *are all* those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the *one* made of dust, **we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one** [at the resurrection].

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep, but **we shall all be changed** [born again of the Spirit], in an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and **the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed**. For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality. **Now when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”**”

It is evident that the resurrection of the saints has not yet occurred. All who have died in the faith will be resurrected as immortal spirit beings. But, when will the resurrection occur?

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When Are the Saints Resurrected?

The prophet Isaiah foretold the day of the first resurrection for those who are Christ's. He prophesied that it would be the birth of a nation out of the earth. At that time the saints would be born again, born of the Spirit: “Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such a thing? **Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day?** Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children” (Isa. 66:8, KJV). The apostle Peter called Christians a royal priesthood and a holy nation: “But you *are* a chosen stock, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession of *God...*” (I Pet. 2:9). When the first resurrection occurs, a holy nation of kings and priests will be born in one day, and they will rule and reign with Jesus Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6) and live forever.

In his first epistle to the Thessalonians in 50 AD, Paul explained that the resurrection of the saints would not take place until the return of Jesus Christ to the earth: “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in exactly the same way also, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him [because they will ascend into the air to meet Him in the clouds]. For this we say to you by *the Word of the Lord*, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede those who have fallen asleep; because the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with *a* shout of command, with *the* voice of an archangel and with *the* trumpet of God; and **the dead in Christ shall rise first** [born again of the Spirit]; **then we who are alive and remain** [will be changed and] **shall be caught up together with them in the clouds for the meeting with the Lord in the air**; and so shall we always be with *the Lord*” (I Thes. 4:14-18).

Jesus Christ also taught that the resurrection of the saints would occur when He returned to earth: “For as the light of day, which comes forth from *the* east and shines as far as *the* west, so also **shall the coming of the Son of man be....**But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And **He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds** [from around the world and bring them up in the air to meet Christ] **from one end of heaven to the other**” (Matt. 24:27, 29-31).

Revelation 15 shows that the resurrected saints will meet Jesus Christ in the air, in the clouds, and stand on the sea of glass: “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and awesome: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is filled up. **And I saw a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God** [symbolizing the righteous prophets and kings who were saved], **and the song of the Lamb** [symbolizing those who were saved from Christ's first coming until the resurrection], saying, ‘Great and awesome *are* Your works, Lord God Almighty; righteous and true *are* Your ways, King of the saints. Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For *You* only *are* holy; and all the nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been revealed’ ” (Rev. 15:1-4).

After the pouring out of the seven last plagues and God's judgment against Babylon the Great (Rev. 16, 18), the glorified saints will return with Jesus Christ to the earth: “And I saw heaven open; and behold, a white horse; and He Who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war. And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns; *and* He had a name written that no one knows except Him. And *He was* clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and **His name is The Word of God**. And the armies in heaven [the resurrected faithful who were raised to meet Christ in the air on the sea of glass] were following Him on white horses; *and* they were clothed in fine linen, white and pure [which is the righteousness of the saints]. And out of His mouth

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goes a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He shall shepherd them with an iron rod; and He treads the winepress of the fury and the wrath of the Almighty God. And on *His* garment and on His thigh He has a name written: **King of kings and Lord of lords.**

“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in *the* midst of heaven, ‘Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God; so that you may eat *the* flesh of kings, and *the* flesh of chief captains, and *the* flesh of mighty men, and *the* flesh of horses, and of those who sit on them, and *the* flesh of all, free and bond, and small and great.’ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war with Him Who sits on the horse, and with His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet who worked miracles in his presence, by which he had deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Those two were cast alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone; and the rest were killed by the sword of Him Who sits on the horse, *even the sword* that goes out of His mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh” (Rev. 19:11-21).

With the destruction of the Beast and the false prophet and their armies, Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, will return to the earth in great power and glory. In that day, he will once again place His feet on the Mount of Olives from where He ascended into heaven as the apostles watched, nearly two thousand years ago: “And after saying these things, *as* they were looking at *Him*, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Now while they were gazing intently up into heaven as He was going up, two men in white apparel suddenly stood by them, who also said, ‘You men of Galilee, why do you stand *here* looking up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come in exactly the same manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.’ Then they returned to Jerusalem from *the mountain* called Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem (Acts 1:9-12).

Just as Jesus ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives, the prophet Zechariah foretold that He would descend from heaven with all the saints to war against all the nations gathered at Jerusalem: “Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. **Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations,** as when he fought in the day of battle.

“**And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives,** which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee *to* the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: **and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.** And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the light shall not be clear, *nor* dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, *that* at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. **And the LORD shall be king over all the earth:** in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” (Zech. 14:1-9).

In summary, all the scriptural evidence presented clearly reveals that one is not “born again, born of the Spirit” until the resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ. Being born again has nothing to do with baptism or conversion. When one has been born again, he or she will be a spirit being—composed of spirit. The resurrected saints will inherit the glory of Jesus Christ, Who will transform their bodies to be like His glorified body: “But for us, the commonwealth of God exists in *the* heavens, from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ; **Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body,** according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself” (Phil. 3:20-21).

This is the true meaning of “born again.”