

# Scriptural Truths

## E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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### Must A Person Be Born Again To Enter Heaven?

#### Introduction

It is a tragic reality that many church going people often find it the hardest to accept the gospel. Why is that? There is a similarity between them and all who seek to get right with God and seek to gain God's righteousness by their good works (Rom. 3:19-20; 5:6-10). My dear old Grandma Jennings was the same. When asked about how to get to Heaven her response was, "To do the best she could and every so often try again by turning over a new leaf." Like the Pharisees, Grandma was no casual spasmodic doer of religious rituals but a person deeply zealous and utterly honest, believing in all sincerity that she was doing the will of God. Despite failures she and they believed when God would weigh their good works there would be sufficient for them to gain admittance into Heaven.

There are for our consideration three such men in the scriptures, the priest or High Priest of the Jewish religion, Nicodemus and Saul of Tarsus. What examples of "good" people they were, yet all their good works and religious dedications could not gain them an entrance into Heaven.

#### 1) Nicodemus

What sort of a man was he? Had one lived in that area they would have soon realized that Nicodemus was a real leader in the Jewish community. He was high up in the church, perhaps in today's world beyond a rabbi or minister in a Protestant church, more in the realm of being a cardinal in the Roman Catholic church. He was a man devoted to the laws of God and the service of God, yet the Lord said to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3), and again, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:5). It is totally irrelevant the office a man holds in the church, be he Rabbi, Pope, Bishop, Cardinal, Monsignor, Pastor, Elder, Deacon, or none of the above, all need to be born again. There are no exceptions. This prompts us to ask in what way was Nicodemus unfit for heaven?

#### 2) Priest or High Priest

There was another man in the Jewish religious community who was perhaps even more devoted to God and higher in the religious hierarchy and that was the priest whose work it was to offer the sacrifices which shadowed the Lord in His death. How clean this man had to be for he held in his hands the holy sacrifices, executed the divine judgment for sins and acceptance for man with God. What does God say concerning him? "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins" (Heb. 10:11). So what he did could never take away the sins of others! What about the man himself? God said, "And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins" (Heb. 5:3) and "But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people" (Heb. 9:7). Despite all his continual earnest endeavors, the priest could not cleanse himself of one sin.

### 3) **Saul**

If ever there was a man (apart from the Lord) who had the human fitness to get into Heaven by works, it was the man who became the apostle Paul. This man suffered greatly after salvation for his faith in Christ and was as “good living” as one could be before it. Before salvation he saw works as the only way of salvation and persecuted with satanic vengeance those who proclaimed salvation through faith alone (Acts 9:1-2). His biological and spiritual background was of the highest pedigree for he acknowledges, “I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” (Rom. 11:1); “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Phil. 3:5, 6). Even boasting, “Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.” (Phil. 3:4). Saul had every assistance one could have. For instance, how many could say, “touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless?” Yet, he had to count all his position, etc. as nothing and depend on the Lord alone for salvation. Saul needed to be born again.

#### **What could the best of their works not do?**

The first startling observation is none of these individuals were fit to approach God or enter Heaven!! Their thoughts were not God’s thoughts, and their way to approach God and be in Heaven was not God’s way. They ought to have realized the way of sinful man’s human endeavors could not be right no matter what the man said. His words were totally against God for God said, not once but twice, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).

The problem was a birth problem. Each of them and each of us is a child of Adam and because of Adam’s sin, we all are born under condemnation. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12). A person cannot change their birth by works. I am a Jennings and no matter what I do I could never be Prince William! To try to do so would be the zenith of foolishness. A child of Adam can never become a child of God by their own works, only by putting their faith and trust in the finished work of Christ.

#### **How can a person be fit for Heaven and to approach God?**

The Lord told Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again” that is, “born from above, from Heaven”. Paul had to have a conviction of personal sin and guilt deserving of eternal punishment, and the acceptance of Christ as Lord before He was assured of Heaven. Being “born again” is the repudiation of all self efforts to attain salvation and wholly dependent on Christ and His works. It is not my works and Christ’s works uniting. It is one hundred percent dependance on the work of Christ when He bore my sins penalty on the cross at Calvary. Notice the imperative language used by Jesus.

- a) The first decision each must make is, “Is Jesus a liar or an exaggerator of divine truth?” If He is telling the truth then to see the Kingdom of God, “Ye must be born again”. If an individual desires to go to Heaven, “Ye must be born again”. If an individual wants relief from the toil of human endeavors the Lord said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). If an individual wants to know the blessed assurance and peace of going to heaven when death occurs, Jesus said, “My peace I give unto you” (Jn. 14:27). Everything depends on Christ and Christ alone.
- b) However, if an individual chooses not to accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour, is not born again, be assured they will spend eternity in Hell, there is nothing to do. The sentence of eternal condemnation is already given. Jesus said, “He/she that believeth not is condemned already” (Jn. 3:18). There are no scales at the judgment, the evidence is presented now and the sentence is given. You are “condemned already”.

#### **God’s words of encouragement**

“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise (never) cast out.” (Jn. 6:37)

“For God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (Jn. 3:16).

God’s free gift is being held out with an outstretched hand in love just waiting for all who will simply accept it. At that moment of acceptance, they are born again and assured of heaven as their eternal home. On the other hand, a person can reject it, and while they live now, they can be assured of being in the caverns of the damned for all eternity.

**Have You Counted the Cost?**

Have you counted the cost, if your soul should be lost,  
Tho' you gain the whole world for your own?  
Even now it may be that the line you have crossed,  
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

. . . *Rowan Jennings*



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