



BORN AGAINST

During the height of the born-again movement in the Philippines, when many celebrities – actors, athletes, businessmen and even politicians – were claiming to have been born again, some critics (who suspected the sincerity of many of these people) started deriding them by proclaiming themselves to be “born against.” I suspect that they were more against the idea of many famous “born-again” persons – who did not exhibit any evidence of a changed life – than being against the born-again experience.

I don’t believe that many people, especially those critics, understood what being born again meant – theologically or experientially. This is really nothing new or unusual. People have always misunderstood God’s way of salvation and His plan to restore lost humanity to His family. It is ironic that the people who need to experience rebirth are the ones who can’t understand it and, consequently, they don’t seek it.

The apostle John’s account of Jesus’ night encounter with Nicodemus is very instructive to us on the importance of being born again. Nicodemus occupied an exalted position in the Sanhedrin, the council of rabbi-leaders who were in charge of the religious education and discipline of Jewish nation. He had heard about the teachings and miracles of Jesus and he came to see Jesus at night in order to avoid being seen by other Pharisees (the elite group of biblical scholars to which he belonged). He had no inkling of how shocked he would be at what Jesus would say to him.

Jesus wasted no time in explaining to Nicodemus that he was not yet eligible to enter the Kingdom of God. It didn’t matter that he was an honored religious teacher and leader, he was still disqualified because of one thing. Jesus said, *“I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3) According to Jesus, a person can’t even see the spiritual reality of God’s Kingdom unless he is born again. He will not understand the ways of the Kingdom. He can be a decent, good religious person like Nicodemus, but he cannot be a part of God’s Kingdom realm unless he is born again.

“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again.” Jesus told him that no one can enter the kingdom of God without being spiritually reborn. Every person born after Adam’s fall came into this world spiritually stillborn. He inherited Adam’s depraved nature – a mindset that is opposed to God’s rule. Human beings are born rebels and enemies of the Kingdom of God. In other words, they are “born against.”

That is why Jesus told Nicodemus in no uncertain terms, *“You must be born again.”* (John 3:7) Now, Jesus didn’t say, “It would be a great idea if you can be born again, Nicodemus, I recommend that you look into it.” He said, “You **must** be born again.” This is the one prerequisite for entering the Kingdom: spiritual rebirth.

If you’re not born again, you are still “born-against.” God would not let you into the Kingdom as a born-against person. It would be like allowing a blind person to drive a car on the freeway. He would just create havoc. That’s what people who are not born again do when they work in the church, they just create havoc. They do not really bless other people. They don’t see kingdom values. They don’t see kingdom power. They don’t pursue kingdom purpose. Why? Because they’re not born again, they are still born-against.

That night, Nicodemus discovered that his true greatest need – humanity’s greatest need – is rebirth. He learned from Jesus that rebirth is the work of the Holy Spirit and it is received by believing in the uplifted Jesus Christ. The Lord Himself taught him that *“God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him.”* (John 3:16-17)

According to Jesus Christ, regardless of how many good works you have done, if you don’t believe in Him, you are not born again, you’re still born-against. So there will be many people who are still born-against who will try to do many good works, who will do their best to obey the Ten Commandments, but it won’t matter. They are already condemned for still being born-against, for not believing in Jesus Christ.

Some people think that they are born again when they are baptized with water and they join a church. You don’t have to join a church to be born again. In fact, the Bible says that you can do it anywhere, anytime. It’s within easy reach, it’s near you.

If you believe in your heart what the Bible says that after Jesus died on the cross, He was buried and He rose from the dead on the third day, and if you declare with your mouth to say, Lord, “I accept you as my Savior and Lord,” you will be reborn and saved. (Rom. 10:8-10) Because when you do that, at that point, God sees you being covered by the finished work of Christ. You’re no longer a rebel, a born-against. You’ve been reborn, renewed and restored. You have entered the Kingdom and have begun a new life as its royal citizen!