

upon Himself the punishment I deserved when He died on the cross. Now, as I place my faith in Him, my debt is paid in full, and I am released from your judgment.

“Today I submit myself to You as my Lord. In light of all You have done for me how can I live for myself any longer? I give You the rest of my life. I invite the Holy Spirit to dwell inside me to convict me of sin and encourage me to obey You. I renounce all forms of sin in my life, choosing to give up everything that displeases You. From now on my greatest desire is to be close to You and draw others to know You. Day by day I will turn to the Holy Spirit for the help I need.

“Finally, based on the promises in your Word I declare that these statements are now true about me: I deserved judgment, but now I’m forgiven; I was rebellious, but now I gladly obey; I was alienated from You, but now I’m your adopted child; I was weak and unable to resist temptation, but now the Holy Spirit lives inside me to strengthen me; I was afraid of death, but now I know I’ll live forever in heaven. With all my heart I thank You for your great gift! Amen.”

## ■ My Next Step

Jesus said every person who follows Him must be willing to publicly acknowledge Him (Mt 10:32, 33). There is no such thing as a “secret Christian.” This is one of the reasons He commanded every believer to be water-baptized (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38). In baptism I publicly declare I have completely surrendered to Jesus and have by faith joined Him in His death and resurrection. So as soon as possible, please sign up for water baptism.

Pastor Steve wishes to acknowledge that significant insights from this brochure have been drawn from some of R.A. Torrey’s writings.



Northwest  
CHURCH

**Dr. C. Stevens Schell, Senior Pastor**  
34800 21st Avenue SW, Federal Way, WA  
www.nwcfoursquare.org • 253-838-6321

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# How to be Born Again

A Step-by-Step Guide for Understanding Salvation

by Pastor Steve Schell



## ■ Why Be Born Again?

Being born again is more than simply changing one's attitude toward God. A person may have positive feelings toward God, His Son Jesus and the Bible, and may even attend church regularly but have never received the inner miracle called the "new birth." This is because it only occurs when the Spirit of God joins Himself to our human spirit. And this union cannot take place until we decide to stop being rebellious or independent from God. Then the barrier of sin which separated us from God is removed and we become "holy temples" where God Himself chooses to dwell.

Familiarity with Christian doctrine and even loyalty to the Christian religion are not enough to bring about this dramatic infusion of the Spirit of God. He comes in only after a person responds to truths revealed by the Holy Spirit. Much confusion has arisen over the centuries because there are people who call themselves "Christians" but show no fruit of a changed life. Their attitudes and behavior make it seem the "new birth" is not a true miracle from God. Their example may even discourage others from turning to Christ. So, let's look more closely at what must take place for a person to be genuinely born again.

## ■ How God Prepares Our Heart

Before a person can be born again, God must reveal certain truths to his or her heart. Without the help of the Holy Spirit no one can understand spiritual truth let alone sincerely respond to it (Jn 6:37, 44, 45, 65). In John 16:7-11, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit is sent to convince us of three things: "sin, righteousness and judgment." He wants to convince every human being of three important truths:

**1. Our sin.** We are sinners desperately in need of God's mercy. Most of us make excuses for the selfish and impure things we do. We assume we are good enough so that if God judges us fairly He will have to let us into

heaven. This is why the Holy Spirit must first reveal to us the depth of our own sin. And when He does this He does not focus on specific things I've done wrong but rather on the fact that I have tried to live independently without Jesus Christ, wanting neither His lordship nor His holiness to interfere with the way I live (Jn 16:9). So the first prayer I should pray is, "God show me myself."

**2. The righteousness of faith.** Only faith in Jesus Christ can give us God's mercy. The Holy Spirit must also do a second miracle. He must convince us Jesus has come to cleanse us from the sin we now see in ourselves (Jn 16:10). I must believe His death on the cross completely paid the penalty for all my sin. And I must believe that when I "cling" to Him, God will give me the gift of eternal life (Jn 3:16). The second prayer I should pray is, "God show me Jesus."

**3. God's judgment.** Judgment awaits those who reject Jesus Christ and follow "the ruler of this world." Though God is loving and wants to save me, He respects my right to choose and will allow me to follow the devil into the place of his eternal judgment if I insist. This is why the Holy Spirit wants to warn me of the terrible danger awaiting those who follow the wrong lord (Jn 16:11; also Jn 3:16). The third prayer I should pray is, "God show me the danger of rejecting your Son."

## ■ How Should I Respond?

God loves and wants to save every human being no matter how sinful his or her life has been (Jn 3:16; 2Pe 3:9). When He died on the cross, Jesus paid for the sins of the entire human race (past, present and future) and His resurrection proved not one sin remained unforgiven. Yet, His death and resurrection will not save me until I choose to receive His salvation and submit to His lordship.

**1. I must reject** any thought that I have been good enough to deserve heaven or have done something so bad God doesn't want me. I must

simply ask for God's mercy.

**2. I must believe** that Jesus' death on the cross completely forgives all my sins (even those I haven't done yet), and determine to put my faith in Him for the rest of my life. By doing this I stand before God wrapped in the goodness of Jesus Christ.

**3. I must decide** that I want eternal life more than all the riches and pleasures this world offers. This means I will live according to God's standards, openly confess Jesus before others and follow wherever He leads (Mt 13:44-46; Lk 9:23-26). My new goal is to serve Him until I die.

## ■ Two Types of Prayer

**1. For those who are not ready yet:** Some people may say, "I'd like to believe these things, but I can't yet. I just don't possess such faith." But if you would like to have such faith, a good way to start would be to pray the following:

"Dear God, I ask You to send the Holy Spirit to help me see myself as You see me, to help me realize that Jesus' cross has made eternal life possible for me, and to warn me of the danger of rejecting Him. If these things are true, I want to know it; and when I do, I'll gladly accept your gift of salvation. Thank You for being patient with me. Amen."

**2. For those who are ready to be born again:** If you know that you are ready to be born again then here is a prayer you can pray. Before you start, ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to mean what you say:

"Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me. I know I am a sinner. Until now I did not want to submit to You or serve You. I wanted to be independent and live for myself. My rebellious heart deceived me, causing me to do many things that will bring upon me your eternal judgment. But your Word says You sent your Son so I might receive mercy. Today I've changed my mind. I don't want to be a rebel anymore. Instead, I cling to the forgiveness Jesus offers me and place all my sin on Him. I believe He took