

## TODAY!

### What Would Jesus Be Doing *If He Were You?*

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”* (Romans 15:13).

#### Insight 8. Becoming A Follower Of Our Lord Jesus (Part 1)

##### Introduction

Let’s discuss a relationship you may be familiar with personally: entering into a marriage covenant. That’s the parallel we’re using for this Insight, the next one, and the previous one (Insight 6). If you recall, Insight 6 emphasized your vital need to rid yourself of every stronghold which may be influencing or exercising control within your soul (your mind, will, emotions).

Using our marriage parallel, demolishing demonic strongholds is like *forsaking* all other romantic relationships and *completely devoting yourself* to the one you will marry. (Holding on to any other romantic relationships constitutes *adultery*. The same holds true within the unseen realm of compromise with demons, something God calls *spiritual adultery* against Him (see Ezekiel 23:37, James 4:4.)

So IF you’re free from demonic strongholds, then you’re prepared to take the steps in Insights 7 and 8 to not only *belong to Jesus* as Lord of your life, but also to *experience the spiritual power* He promises His own.

*“I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock [of trust in Christ] I will establish the ones I call out of the world system [ekklesia, the called-out ones], and the gates of hell will not prove stronger than they are”*

(Matthew 16:18, paraphrase).

In this declaration Jesus clarifies some essential promises about those who know and follow Him as Lord of their lives. •HE is the One Who *establishes His own* who trust Him as their Lord. •HE

calls each of His own *out of the world’s values and goals* which are set against His Lordship and Kingdom. •*Very real demonic warfare* confronts those who trust and serve Jesus as their Lord—and HE promises that in His care and power the forces of evil *will not prevail* against them.

Is it your intentional desire to live in loving and trusting union with your Lord and by His grace serve HIM and obey His commands? If so, then weigh within your heart three biblical requirements for you to effectively and fruitfully follow Jesus:

1. **You must be born again.**
2. **You must receive a baptism of repentance.**
3. **You must be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**

In this Insight we’ll discuss the biblical backdrop and your need to be born again. Insight 8 will explore the two baptisms.

##### 1. You must be born again.

**Being born again—experiencing spiritual rebirth—is THE most important relational step a person can take. Being born from above is a heartfelt response to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit:**

- you accept Jesus’s shed blood for your sins,
- you become the Father’s child,
- you spend eternity with Him.

Two hundred years before the coming of Jesus, the Spirit revealed the need to be born from above to Jews from what we call **“the Hebraic stream of Judaism,”** people who related to God in *trust-based obedience* as their ancestor Abraham did. Rather than obeying the man-made laws which were added to the Hebrew Scriptures (Mark 7:9-13), the Hebraic Stream

sought to live with same *trust-filled relationship* of responsive obedience that Abraham had with God. To this group, conversion meant *spiritual rebirth*. Being “born from above” was a shift from following the letter of the law and man-made religious traditions to daily choosing loving, obedient trust in their Father.

Because the whole concept of being *born from above* had been around the Jewish community for at least two centuries, Jesus was surprised when Nicodemus professed ignorance of this new birth: “*Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this?*” (John 3:10).

**From the perspective of the new Covenant and new life in Christ, being born again is the point at which you shift from religious observances being the center of your spiritual life to putting your full trust and reliance in Jesus as LORD Who personally guides and empowers your daily life.**

Jesus endorsed this escape from reliance on religious practice and ceremony when He instructed those who criticized Him that His disciples didn’t fast:

*“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins”* (Mark 2:21,22).

No one can rely on religious form and ritual, and then add wholehearted trust in Jesus as their Lord and patch them together. Neither can they pour their old reliance on religious form and ritual into a singularly focused desire to live and serve Jesus as their only beloved LORD.

The writer to the Hebrews calls us too to cast off reliance on religious form:

*“And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His own blood. Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come”* (Hebrews 13:12-14).

This is the same depth of obedient trust enacted by Abraham toward His Lord. But trying to *fully trust Jesus* while still relying on religious tradition and practice to make you acceptable to God rips apart your relationship with Him and renders you useless in the Kingdom.

How do you become new wine in a new wineskin, thereby bearing His disgrace? Jesus pointed His listeners and us to the source for this transformation. It’s written in the Older Testament:

***“Whoever trusts in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who trust in Him are to receive”*** (John 7:38,39).

The only Scripture in existence when He spoke this was the Hebrew Bible, the “Older Testament.” Throughout that text His Father established relationships with people through initiating covenants. Our Lord was the Father’s means for establishing a *new Covenant*, one with eternal consequences.

The sacrifice of Jesus inaugurated a New Covenant. But the Gospel—the Good News of how to enter that Covenant—is made known in the Older Testament.

***“This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you”***  
(Luke 22:20).

The word “covenant” can mean to *come into union with*, particularly as it pertains to a marital relationship. The New

Covenant our Father offers invites you to *personally live in union with Him* until the day of your salvation at the Judgment Throne. Lifelong union implies *oneness*, and an *ongoing pilgrimage* with Him on earth until the time your name is read aloud before the hosts of heaven. Jesus affirms how essential this oneness is:

*“I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one: I in them and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me”* (John 17:22,23).

*“I am the Vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5).

These are two of many places our Lord Jesus describes the *joined nature* of the Covenant relationship. He never intended that Christianity be divided into denominations and sects, each competing rather than unifying in loving trust. But without Jesus as the ONLY Head of His collective called-out ones, disunity will continue to mushroom. For you it's important to understand that to be born again is to *enter directly into a Covenant relationship* with the Father through Jesus.

Your goal in keeping the Covenant is to increasingly be conformed to the character and love of Jesus, bringing glory to our Father. This is to be a daily way of life for you.

Being born again is entering the Father's New Covenant. And the stipulations for entering that Covenant of new birth are *from your heart*. These are your:

- **Repentance**
- **Love**
- **Obedient Trust**
- **Forceful Conviction and Determination**
- **Forgiveness of Others**

Please, if you aren't familiar with the biblical stipulations for you to enter into Covenant with our Father as the Hebrew Scriptures direct, prayerfully read our article, *The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage for Salvation*.

written format:

<[www.Restorationministries.org/html/CovenantGospel.html](http://www.Restorationministries.org/html/CovenantGospel.html)>

audio format:

<[http://www.restorationministries.org/Podcasts/GoSpOfTheCovenant\\_1-2.mp3](http://www.restorationministries.org/Podcasts/GoSpOfTheCovenant_1-2.mp3)>.

*“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who trusts in Me should stay in darkness”* (John 12:46).

*“[You] open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by trust in Me”* (Acts 26:18).

There's no middle ground. Until the moment you're actually born again you *live in darkness*, owned by Satan and influenced by his demons. How hard this biblical reality is for people to recognize!

**The difficulty with false gospels that are preached today is that the people who embrace them believe they now belong to God even while they are still enslaved by the devil. The master deceiver has deluded them with man-centered lies which cater to their sin nature and self-reliance even as they attend services and perhaps read their Bible. BUT, they are still Satan's.**

For example, the most common sin of people who embrace false gospels is *unresolved bitterness* toward someone. But one of the stipulations for entering the New Covenant is that you must forgive others. Why? Because when you forgive others from your heart, you understand the cost of Jesus's death on the cross when He

paid the penalty for your sins. This stipulation is why both Jesus and John warn,

*“But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”* (Matthew 6:15).

*“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness”* (1John 2:9).

Being born again enters a life-long *Covenant union* with our Father. Lord Jesus is your only Head. If your spiritual life relies on religious props such as services and observances rather than the “Vine/branch” relationship Jesus expresses in John 15, you’ve embraced a false gospel. ***The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*** lays out the biblical truths you need to prayerfully weigh.

### **Jesus Is The Melchizedek High Priest, The Born Again Are All Priests.**

*“[Jesus] purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth”* (Revelation 5:9,10).

Recognizing that the born again *become priests* who serve within the Melchizedek Priesthood of Jesus is foreign in the revised Levitical priesthood that’s been adapted by clergy throughout Christendom. But *you personally* need to understand that our Lord views the born again as His priests on earth. Other reminders of this key privilege and call:

*“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light”* (1Peter 2:9).

*“From Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful witness, the Firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him Who*

*loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father—to Him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen”* (Revelation 1:5,6).

To be born again requires your *heartfelt conviction* toward the five stipulations of our Father for entering the New Covenant:

- **Your Repentance**
- **Your Love**
- **Your Obedient Trust**
- **Your Forceful Conviction & Determination**
- **Your Forgiveness of Others**

Because embracing this most important Covenant our Father offers mankind is so serious, we urge you again to prayerfully read ***The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage for Salvation***.

You’re entering a relationship of full devotion to Jesus as Lord of your life. Joining Him like a branch on a Vine and living to bring glory to your heavenly Father means you’re abandoning the world’s goals and values, along with reliance on religious form and traditions.

You’re becoming a priest who undividedly serves Jesus in the order of Melchizedek. In Insight 8 we’ll discuss the two baptisms you need to fully identify with Christ and live empowered by His Spirit.

**Before being born again, you were captive to your sin nature and demonic strongholds, and guilty of all your sins.**



**When you’re born again you’re freed from the kingdom of darkness, and the penalty for your sins is fully paid for on the cross.**

