Lesson 140 - What it means to be born again

1. If we are not born again, what do we miss out on? **John 3:3**

   EGW: Jesus answered and said unto him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He virtually said to Nicodemus, It is not controversy that will help your case. Arguments will not bring light to your soul. You must have a new heart, or you cannot discern the kingdom of heaven. It is not greater evidence that will bring you into a right position, but new purposes, new springs of action. You must be born again. Until this change takes place, until all things are made new, the strongest evidence that could be presented would be useless. The want is in your own heart; everything must be changed or you cannot see the kingdom of God. {PH080 44.1}

2. What are we to be born of to be born again? **John 3:6**

   EGW: Christ is soon coming in the clouds of heaven, and we must be prepared to meet him, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. We are now to accept the invitation of Christ. He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The words of Christ to Nicodemus are of practical value to us today: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." {RH, April 28, 1891 par. 7}

3. What instrument helps us to become born again? **1 Peter 1:23**

   EGW: In no way can Christ's disciples be cleansed but by obedience to the truth. The apostle Paul writes: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." And Peter writes: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have

tasted that the Lord is gracious." {SW, June 11, 1907 par. 1}

4. What does “born of the Spirit” mean? **Romans 8:1, 4; Galatians 5:16, 24-25**

EGW: While the Christian's life will be characterized by humility, it should not be marked with sadness and self-depreciation. It is the privilege of every one to so live that God will approve and bless him. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that we should be ever under condemnation and darkness. There is no evidence of true humility in going with the head bowed down and the heart filled with thoughts of self. We may go to Jesus and be cleansed, and stand before the law without shame and remorse. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” [Romans 8:1.] {GC88 477.2}

5. If we are born again, what is placed in us? **Ezekiel 18:31, 36:26**

EGW: All who would enter the city of God must during their earthly life set forth Christ in their dealings. It is this that constitutes them the messengers of Christ, His witnesses. They are to bear a plain, decided testimony against all evil practices, pointing sinners to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. He gives to all who receive Him, power to become the sons of God. Regeneration is the only path by which we can enter the city of God. It is narrow, and the gate by which we enter is strait; but along it we are to lead men and women and children, teaching them that, in order to be saved, they must have a new heart and a new spirit. The old, hereditary traits of character must be overcome. The natural desires of the soul must be changed. All deception, all falsifying, all evilspeaking, must be put away. The new life, which makes men and women Christlike, is to be lived. {9T 23.1}

6. If we are “born of the Spirt”, what do we become? **2 Corinthians 5:17**

EGW: No compromise with sin can ever be accepted by a pure and holy God. No conversion is genuine which does not radically change the heart, the character, and every line of conduct. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The gift of the Lord Jesus is a new character, a new creature in Christ Jesus. Not a moment should be wasted on a patchwork religion. We must shine as lights in the world. May the Lord bless you and your family, that you may reveal Christ in a life of faith, purity, true godliness and holiness. Thus it must be with every soul who is a citizen of heaven. Our citizenship is above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. This present life is only our training school; it is to purify us, that we may be without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing--meet for

the inheritance of the saints in light. {18MR 277.4}

7. What is passed away, when a person is born again? **First half of 2 Corinthians 5:17**

EGW: This experience is the highest evidence of the divine authorship of the Bible. We receive God's word as food for the soul, through the same evidence by which we receive bread as food for the body. Bread supplies the need of our nature; we know by experience that it produces blood and bone and brain. Apply the same test to the Bible; when its principles have actually become the elements of character, what has been the result? what changes have been made in the life? "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17. In its power, men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. The profane have become reverent, the drunken sober, the profligate pure. Souls that have borne the likeness of Satan have been transformed into the image of God. This change is itself the miracle of miracles. A change wrought by the word, it is one of the deepest mysteries of the word. We cannot understand it; we can only believe, as declared by the Scriptures, it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. {Ed 171.4}

8. What do all things become? **End of 2 Corinthians 5:17**

EGW: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Nothing but divine power can regenerate the human heart and imbue souls with the love of Christ, which will ever manifest itself with love for those for whom He died. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. When a man is converted to God, a new moral taste is supplied, a new motive power is given, and he loves the things that God loves; for his life is bound up by the golden chain of the immutable promises to the life of Jesus. Love, joy, peace, and inexpressible gratitude will pervade the soul, and the language of him who is blessed will be, "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (Psalm 18:35). {1SM 336.1}

9. What is another object we become when we are born again? **Luke 5:38**

EGW: In speaking of the true doctrines of his kingdom, Jesus said: "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be

put into new bottles; and both are preserved." {ST, October 29, 1896 par. 1}

The priests, rabbis, Sadducees, scribes, and Pharisees, who had hitherto held undisputed authority in matters of religion, and who were unwilling to give place to Christ, and to receive the truths of his kingdom, were represented as old bottles. They were found unfit to contain the new wine of his doctrines, and it was necessary to find depositories for the truth outside of those who were satisfied with their own spiritual attainments. In the teaching of Christ provision was made for a change of heart, for a new development of character. His system was designed for the whole human family. It was founded on faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. The truth received into the heart would make decided changes in the character. Brought into the soul temple, it would cleanse from all moral defilement. Those who profess to receive the truth, and yet who are unchanged in character, make it manifest that they have received but a theory of the truth, and do not know what is the vital influence of its operations. Practical godliness leads its possessor to keep the commandments of God. It lifts the soul out of its moral depravity, and the believing, repenting one realizes not only that his sins are forgiven, but that he is cleansed from all unrighteousness. By faith he beholds the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. {ST, October 29, 1896 par. 2}

10. What do born again people put on? **Beginning of Ephesians 4:24**

EGW: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." The apostle admonishes his brethren, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, that after having professed the gospel they should not conduct themselves as did the Gentiles, but should show by their daily deportment that they had been truly converted. {5T 171.3}

"Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Once they were corrupt, degraded, enslaved by lustful passions; they were drugged by worldly opiates, blinded, bewildered, and betrayed by Satan's devices. Now that they had been taught the truth as it is in Jesus, there must be a decided change in their life and character. {5T 172.1}

11. What two things are they created in? **End of Ephesians 4:24**

EGW: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. The glory he

mentioned is character, therefore by thinking and talking of Jesus we become charmed with His character, and by faith we become changed from character to character. "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "Ye are the light of the world . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." We must practice the example of Christ, bearing in mind His Sonship and His humanity. It was not God that was tempted in the wilderness, nor a god that was to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself. It was the Majesty of heaven who became a man--humbled Himself to our human nature. {6MR 342.2}

We are not to serve God as if we were not human, but we are to serve Him in the nature we have, that has been redeemed by the Son of God; through the righteousness of Christ we shall stand before God pardoned, and as though we had never sinned. We will never gain strength in considering what we might do if we were angels. We are to turn in faith to Jesus Christ, and show our love to God through obedience to His commands. Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Jesus says, "follow me." "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Jesus leads the way. Do not wait and continue in disobedience, hoping circumstances may change making it easier for you to obey. Go forward for you know the will of God. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." {6MR 342.3}

12. By putting on the “new man” (Colossians 3:10), what is put off? **Colossians 3:9**

EGW: Will every soul before the old year closes put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, Christ Jesus? Let there be no great ambitious stress to buy presents for Christmas and New Year's. Little presents for the children may not be amiss, but the Lord's people should not spend His money in buying costly presents. {UL 367.2}

13. After baptism, how are we to walk? **Romans 6:4**

EGW: By baptism you have taken upon you a solemn pledge. In the name and presence of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, you have solemnly covenanted to be the Lord's. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." I think that if we all understood the sacred ceremony, we should see much more

in it than we now discern. {6MR 25.3}

14. What is the “old man”, which is our old lifestyle to become? **Romans 6:6**

EGW: (no comment)

15. What will we no longer serve? **Romans 6:6**

EGW: (no comment)

16. What do we become towards sin? **Romans 6:7-8** [Hint: The same word appears in verse 8.]

EGW: (no comment)

17. In that state, what does that make us regarding sin? **Romans 6:7**

EGW: (no comment)

18. What is to be cast away? **Ezekiel 18:31**

EGW: (no comment)

19. What will a “born again” person do? **1 John 2:29**

EGW: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." God has tested the character of men from the time of Adam unto the present time, and he has

always blessed the loyal and obedient. But those who keep the law of Jehovah are not in favor with the world, or with professed Christians who are making void the law of God. Abel kept the commandment of the Lord, and was hated by his brother Cain, and from the time of Abel's persecution and death at the hands of his brother, there have been two classes upon the earth who have manifested the same characteristics as were displayed by these two brothers. Righteous men have always been the objects of the combined assaults of evil men and evil angels. Christ himself was betrayed, insulted, mocked, scourged, and crucified through the instigation of evil angels working through a class of men who, while they professed great sanctity, were the worst of hypocrites and deceivers. {ST, November 14, 1895 par. 1}

20. What does a “born again” person not do? **1 John 3:9**

EGW: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." He feels that he is the purchase of the blood of Christ and bound by the most solemn vows to glorify God in his body and in his spirit, which are God's. The love of sin and the love of self are subdued in him. He daily asks: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The true Christian will never complain that the yoke of Christ is galling to the neck. He accounts the service of Jesus as the truest freedom. The law of God is his delight. Instead of seeking to bring down the divine commands, to accord with his deficiencies, he is constantly striving to rise to the level of their perfection. {5T 220.1}

21. What does a “born again” person overcome? **1 John 5:4**

EGW: It is only by watching unto prayer, and the exercise of living faith, that the Christian can preserve his integrity in the midst of the temptations that Satan brings to bear upon him. But "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Talk to your heart constantly the language of faith: "Jesus said he would receive me, and I believe his word. I will praise him; I will glorify his name." Satan will be close by your side to suggest that you do not feel any joy. Answer him, "'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' I have everything to be glad of; for I am a child of God. I am trusting in Jesus. The law of God is in my heart; none of my steps shall slide." {ST, May 15, 1884 par. 13}

22. What do we need to do to reach victory over sin? **1 John 5:1**

EGW: Let the words of the beloved disciple be considered and practiced: "Whosoever believeth that

Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." If all would take heed to these words and obey them, we should see in all our institutions a different state of things. The souls of the workers would be surrounded by an atmosphere that is healthful, like a precious odor, a savor of life unto life. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have from him, That he who loveth God will love his brother also." {1888 1391.1}

23. When it says that a “born again” person does not sin, referring to the lifestyle (Romans 6:12), if an “oops” moment does happen and we sin, where do we turn to? **1 John 2:1**

EGW: But suppose that we sin after we have been forgiven, after we have become the children of God, then need we despair?--No: for John writes: "My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (chap. 2:1). Jesus is in the heavenly courts, pleading with the Father in our behalf. He presents our prayers, mingling with them the precious incense of His own merit, that our prayers may be acceptable to the Father. He puts the fragrance into our prayers, and the Father hears us because we ask for the very things which we need, and we become to others a savor of life unto life. {3SM 197.1}