

# Amazing Grace

Bible Study Fellowship

## Are Members of Christ's Body

### Born Again or Saved?

Part 1 of 2



J. Michael Schroeder

Amazing Grace Bible Study Fellowship is a non-denominational church fellowship dedicated to the publishing of the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16), and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery of Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 3:3. Our goal is to study the Bible in accordance with 2 Timothy 2:15, in order to become established in the truth of it according to Romans 1:11; to the end that we might come into conformity with the will of God for our lives according to Romans 12:3.

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Part 1 of 2

Several years ago a preacher I am acquainted with was approached by a street evangelist who asked him, "are you saved? are you born again?" The preacher hesitated for a moment, then responded with, "yes, and no."

Dumbfounded, the evangelist said, "what do you mean?" The preacher then proceeded to explain to him that you are either one or the other, but not both.

It's hard to say exactly when the two designations came to be held as one and the same. Luther's famous exclamation, after seeing the truth of Romans 3,4 and 5, "I felt as though I had been 'born again,'" could have been the beginning, but there is little debate that the idea that being saved or born again is the same thing, and has been thoroughly canonized in Christian Evangelical mindset through the preaching of Billy Graham, who has made the concept the centerpiece of every sermon he's ever preached in a crusade.

1

Tracts have also been a popular means of spreading the idea. One of which I recently had the opportunity to read is entitled, "Are you Born Again?"<sup>1</sup> The tract begins with John 3, the only place in Scripture where the phrase, "born again", appears.

"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."  
John 3:3

This is followed by the assertion that those who are "truly" born again will bear certain marks in their behavior. All of these "marks" are, understandably, derived from John's later letters. The first of these, the tract asserts, is found in 1 John 3:9:

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin:..."

2

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The fifth mark is from 1 John 5:4:

"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."

He'll hate the world and any kind of worldly activity (e.g., watching secular movies, sports events, television, consuming alcoholic beverages (God forbid that demon rum of any kind should pass over his lips!); tobacco of any kind; card and board games; computer games, any form of secular music, involvement in politics, or any other activity the "world" happens to find pleasure in.

Perhaps the Amish might qualify under this stricture, but I imagine, if you were to follow one of them around 24/7, you would discover that they don't.

The last mark is from 1 John 5:18

1

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

Here is a reiteration of chapter three, verse 9, claiming that those born of God will not sin. I happen to believe that this means they cannot, and therefore will not sin AT ALL. There is no provision for something less than this in John's equation, as the tract's writer attempts to assert.

No doubt there are more than a few Christians who think they are in compliance with all this, but they are only kidding themselves, and they certainly aren't fooling God.

John isn't speaking of the Body of Christ, which is a designation exclusive to the Pauline revelation of the mystery, in his respective writings; he is speaking of and to Israel under the new covenant.

2