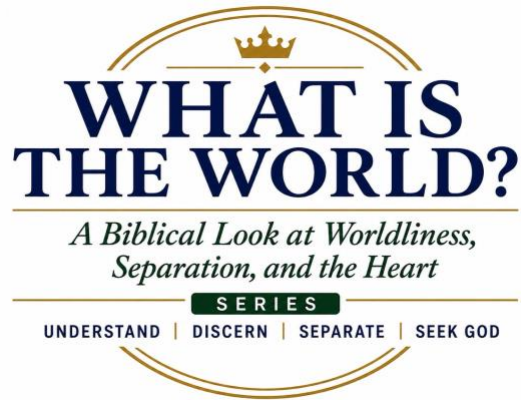




Lesson 7: Born Amish Is Not the Same as Born Again

1. What Does the Bible Mean by “The World”?	5. The Fear of Man and the Danger of Tradition
2. Plain on the Outside, Worldly on the Inside	6. Modesty, Technology, and Christian Liberty
3. The Sins We Do Not Always Call Worldly	7. Born Amish Is Not the Same as Born Again
4. Hidden Worldliness and the Lusts of the Flesh	8. You Can Leave the Amish and Still Miss Christ

Lesson Overview

A person can be raised in an Amish home, attend church, be baptized, follow the Ordnung, dress plain, and live simply without ever being born again. Amish heritage can shape a person's culture, but it cannot give spiritual life.

Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.” This lesson explains why family faith, church membership, baptism, good works, and obedience cannot save. Salvation is God's gift to those who personally repent and believe on Jesus Christ.

Main Scripture

John 3:3-7

“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. ⁴ Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

Main Truth

Being born Amish is not the same as being born again. Every person must receive new life from God by personally trusting Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Memory Verse

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Section 1: Religion Can Be Inherited, but Salvation Cannot

Samuel was born into an Amish family. From childhood, he rode to church in a buggy, spoke Pennsylvania Dutch, wore plain clothes, and learned the customs of his community. He knows how communion works, what clothing is expected, and what his church allows. If asked what he is, Samuel quickly says, “I am Amish.”

But if someone asks, “When did you personally trust Jesus Christ as your Savior?” Samuel does not know how to answer. He may say that he was born Amish, has always believed in God, or comes from a faithful family. None of those answers is the same as the new birth.

Born of God

John 1:12-13

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

The words “not of blood” show that spiritual life does not come through a family line. God does not have grandchildren. Parents may teach the Bible, pray for their children, and point them to Christ, but they cannot believe or repent for them. Each person must receive Christ and believe on His name.

A Faith of Your Own

Amos faithfully teaches his eight children the Ordnung and takes them to church. He can pass down a farm, tools, language, clothing patterns, and family traditions. He can teach discipline and order. Yet Amos cannot give any child a new heart. He can teach about God, but he cannot give spiritual life.

Christianity is not merely belonging to a group or continuing the religion of our parents. The important question is not only whether our family believes. We must ask whether we have personally come to Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Why can a person inherit Amish customs but not inherit salvation?
2. What is the difference between always believing in God and personally receiving Christ?
3. What can Christian parents do for their children, and what can they not do for them?
4. Is your faith resting on Jesus Christ or mainly on the faith and customs of your family?

Section 2: Baptism and Good Works Cannot Save

Lydia reaches the age when young people in her community normally join the church. She receives instruction, answers the expected questions, and is baptized. Her family is pleased. Yet Lydia believes that baptism, church membership, and a faithful life will help her reach heaven. She has never understood that salvation is a gift of grace.

The problem is not baptism. Baptism is biblical and important. The problem is trusting baptism to do what only Jesus Christ can do. Water cannot forgive sin or give eternal life. Church membership cannot replace the new birth.

The Thief Who Could Do No Works

The thief on the cross had no time to join a church, be baptized, keep rules, or prove himself through years of good works. He could only turn to Jesus in faith. Christ did not tell him to earn salvation. He gave him a promise.

Luke 23:42-43

“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. ⁴³ And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

The thief was saved because of Christ, not because of religious works. His example does not make baptism unimportant. It proves that baptism is not the Savior. Jesus is the Savior.

How Good Is Good Enough?

Jacob is known as a good Amish man. He helps neighbors, gives to families in need, pays his bills, attends church, and avoids many things he calls worldly. Jacob believes God will accept him because he has tried hard. But he has also lied, lusted, become proud, held bitterness, and spoken harshly. Good works cannot erase those sins.

Titus 3:5

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”

If good works could save us, Jesus would not have needed to die. Salvation rests on God's mercy and the finished work of Christ. Good works come after salvation as its fruit. We do not obey so God will save us. We obey because Christ has saved us and changed our hearts.

Discussion Questions

1. Why can baptism and church membership not replace the new birth?
2. What does the thief on the cross teach us about the true source of salvation?
3. Why can good works never erase the guilt of sin?
4. If baptism, church membership, and good works could not save you, would Christ alone be enough?

Section 3: The New Birth Is New Life in Christ

Nicodemus was a respected religious leader who knew the Scriptures and followed Jewish customs. Jesus did not tell him to become a little more religious. He told him, “Ye must be born again.” The first birth gives physical life. The new birth gives spiritual life through the work of God's Spirit.

A person can change his behavior without receiving new life. Eli may stop drinking, attend church, respect his parents, and follow the Ordnung more carefully because he fears being caught or wants approval. Those changes may improve his life, but outward reform is not the same as a new heart.

A New Creature

2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

The new birth does not mean a believer becomes perfect. It means God gives new life and begins changing the direction of the heart. The person starts to see sin differently, love Christ, desire God's Word, and seek what pleases God. These changes do not earn salvation. They give evidence that God is at work within.

Trust the Bridge

Peter and John stand beside a deep river where a strong bridge crosses to the other side. Peter says, “I believe the bridge can hold me,” but he refuses to step onto it. John says the same thing, then steps onto the bridge and trusts it to carry him safely across. John is the one who is actually trusting the bridge.

Saving faith is more than knowing facts about Jesus. It means resting the full weight of your soul on Him. You stop trusting your goodness, church, baptism, heritage, and obedience. You trust that Jesus Christ died for your sins, rose again, and is able to save you.

Romans 10:9

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

Jesus Christ Is Enough

Biblical assurance is not pride when our confidence rests in Christ. The proud person trusts himself. The believer trusts the promise of God and the finished work of Jesus.

1 John 5:13

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Being born Amish gives a person a family and culture. Being born again gives spiritual life. The most important question is not whether you are Amish, baptized, or respected. The question is whether you have personally turned from trusting yourself and are resting your eternal soul completely on Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between outward reform and receiving new life from God?
2. How does the bridge story explain the difference between knowing facts and trusting Christ?
3. What changes may begin to appear when God gives a person new life?
4. Are you resting your hope of heaven completely on Jesus Christ and what He did for you?