

Evangelistic Message to Young People

by Richard Owen Roberts

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being born again to see and enter the Kingdom of God. It discusses the necessity of repentance and faith, highlighting the parallel between physical birth and spiritual birth, and the urgency to turn from self-centeredness to following Christ. The speaker challenges the audience to understand the two kingdoms, repent from sin, and commit their lives to Christ.

Scripture: John 3:3, John 3:5, Matthew 7:13, Acts 3:19, Ephesians 2:1

Topics: "Born Again", "Repentance and Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Absolutely splendid seats. Thank you. You're on the proper floor.

So then you can have the curtains. Joseph, do you want to move up like closer to your sister? Just a little closer. I want to use three passages of scripture tonight, one that we have read as the second passage.

I'd like you to turn, please, to the book of Ephesians. You boys don't know the Bible. Hardly.

Hardly. I've only read one page of the book. I'm surprised you still haven't.

Now because there is no one here tonight who will object to informality, I'd like to make a suggestion. You're free not to act upon it if you like, but nonetheless I'm urging you to do so. If I say anything tonight that doesn't make sense to you, will you interrupt me? I'm urging you to do so.

I really don't have anything to say because I just have to be sad. And we'll feel upset if I don't, but it's sad. I have a burden I'd like to convey to you, but if I say things you don't appreciate or understand, then I'll fail in my purpose.

So if you have any trouble with this, feel free to interrupt. A little politeness helps. It's always nice to finish a sentence, but that's the only thing that I could ask that you give me a statement that you're wanting to interrupt.

I shall be very glad if you do that for any significant purpose. I want you to have a soothing verse. Excuse me.

Ephesians chapter 2. Just three verses. Verse three. And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the principle power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of this people.

Among them ye too all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind that were by nature children of wrath, even as of... Now, I would imagine most of you, at least, have heard the word depravity. I'm not so sure that most of you will know what it means. So let me begin.

Now, this is not an exercise in anything that I'm not really burdened to teach you about. Rather, your understanding of the truth of God's word is very urgent as far as your personal life is concerned. If I use the word rectitude, how many of you know what that means? Looks like a pretty good number.

One, two, perhaps. Now, think in terms of moral rectitude. If you don't know what the word means, get that in your head.

Moral rectitude. And moral depravity. Now, rectitude means that you go to a distant point in the straight line.

Now, it won't be an insult. I'm looking at that door over there, which I'm going to call the door to nowhere. And I'm going to say that it is my assignment to exercise rectitude and to go directly to that door.

But I cannot go straight from here without moving some of you and suggesting that I can go as straight as possible. The moral rectitude, God, in as straight a fashion as is possible. On the other hand, depravity speaks of inability to go in any kind of straight line.

So, okay, demonstrate for me. My goal is the door to nowhere. My word, what is this? Is this as long as it looks? Isn't it curious, aren't they? Hmm.

You might say that you might like this. Or that you... No. You know, I've got to go to that door.

That's my car. Oh, well, that's a mental activity. But you know, my legs are kind of tired.

Oh, my legs. I understood this is not easy. The inability to go in a straight line to the place where you're standing.

Now, that's how you perform. You perform with inability to go in a straight line to the place that God created you to go. Instead, you meander all over everywhere.

For a little while, in this direction. And, you know, some people, oh, look at this. There's an old man behind this little petition.

So all kinds of things distract you. You never really make any consequential progress because you were born to pray. And you die to pray.

Unless you are born a second time. Have you got that clear? No. Nothing absolutely true.

Let's think. What does it really mean to be to pray? Does that mean that a person sins to the full extent of their ability? Well, now, I look around me and, no, it does not look to me as if any of you have sinned as

much as you could. Have you done family pleasing? Oh, my God.

It wouldn't be hard, would it, to be worse than you are? No, all of us find that. We can be a whole lot worse than we are. And also, we can be a whole lot better than we are.

But if you were three times better than you have been, you would still be praying. Because you do not have the ability to go in a straight line. No matter how hard you try to be better than you are, you're still no good.

Still utterly incapable of fulfilling the purpose for which you were created. So, we don't sin to the full extent of our capacity or merit, unless we do it really anxiously with God. I mean, plenty of young people who started out in a church like this decided they didn't like it, and the more they got into it, and they turned as far away as they could.

Some of you heard me say the other day that I spent three days in prison in the month of March. I'm supposed to spend four days in prison next week, and begin in prison next month. Now, in prison, I talk to numerous fellows who are in prison for the rest of their life, with no possibility of ever getting out.

But all of those that talked to me all said the same thing. I didn't intend to come to that. I didn't have any plan at all to spend the rest of my life in prison.

It just said my name. Well, it got out of hand. I did some things that I was planning to do.

Now, I'm paying for that. Now, I hope none of you will end up in prison, but all of us have that capacity. You could easily spend your life in prison as could anyone of us.

So, we all have the capacity to be worse than we are, but not one of us can say, I don't think I have any interest in going to hell. I am determined to go to heaven, and I am going to live so well that even God himself can't insist on that, that he's bound to be safer there, because you don't have that ability. You're born with it.

You plan it. And it's not that I'm saying, well, there's an exception that says you're worse than anybody else. But no, we're all in the same fix.

All of us were born without the kind of knowledge of God that is necessary to escape from our life of sin. People who start out like that and harden their hearts rather tend to void their conscience so that they end up doing things they never intended to do and not even really aware of what they are doing. So, the practical issue I want you to think of as we're starting, and as I've already said, in your physical birth, you were born with the credit, and that will not change by anything that you do.

So, the decrepit person is the person whose faculties, whose powers of body and soul are previously eroded. That person is unable to change themselves. Now, let's pay attention to the three verses that we read from Ephesians 2. You were born dead in trespasses and in sin.

Every one of you born dead. Now, have you ever actually do you realize that although you are alive, you are dead? I hope everybody realizes that. When a person is born physically, they are only alive physically.

In order to be alive spiritually, you have to be born a second time. So, the Apostle Paul, in this first verse, makes it crystal clear that all of us, without any exception, were born dead in trespasses and in sin. That's an all-inclusive statement, as I just said.

There are no exceptions to that. So, in verse 2, in which you formally walk, so what it comes down to is if you can say, that's the way I formally walk, then that means that you're no longer dead in trespasses and sins. But, unless you've been born again, you cannot say, that's the way I formally walk, because you're still walking in the way in which you were born, in trespasses and in sin.

And he adds, in verse 2, we walked according to the prince of the power of the air and the spirit that is now working in the sons of Israel. So, when you were born, there was a prince in your life. Now, in this church, you have often heard, I think, John refer to Christ as the prince.

But there is also another prince in whom, in whose family, you were born, the prince of darkness, Satan himself. And you have this nature, and you follow his bidding until that time when, in by the grace of God, you are born again. You then are transformed to have truly new life.

And this prince, the prince of the power of the air, makes us sons of disobedience. And so, verse 3, we are always that way, formally indulging in the desires of the flesh and of the mind. And we're, by nature, children of God.

You can tell me, I've often heard that. So I'm not in a position to say anything. But no one has a reason to say anything.

That's not the point. The point is, have you really faced the fact that unless you are born a second time, you die in the same way in which you were born the first time, in depravity, under the curse of Satan, you'd be inability to please God. Now let's turn to the second passage that has been read, and let's consider some of the critical issues that are set forth in this second passage.

And as you turn to the second passage, let me call to attention a matter of extraordinary importance. Do you realize that there are, right now, two kingdoms? You were born into the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of death, into the kingdom of Satan. That's where you start.

And as I said earlier, that's where you die unless you are born into the kingdom of God. So let's think about that particular issue. Sense the form of the rebellious angel that is described in the book of Jude, in verse 6. All of us belong to the realm of darkness.

These two powerful kingdoms lie with each other. The kingdom of God, the kingdom of Satan. We are all born initially as children of Satan, not children of God.

As citizens of the kingdom of Satan, not the kingdom of God. We remain in that kingdom in which we were born unless we're born a second time. Now let me just convert some rather obvious facts.

People cannot join the kingdom of God. Suppose you said to your son, I don't want to go to hell. I don't want to remain in the kingdom of darkness.

I'm going to join the kingdom of God. You couldn't do it. Suppose you said, well, I believe my mother and father are genuine Christians and being their child.

I know how inherent the kingdom of God is. It has inherent the kingdom of God. Well, suppose you say, I have a very wealthy grandson.

He's quite handsome and he has made a certain age. You're my principal heir. I know I'm coming in for a large sum of money.

I'll spend a chunk of that money to buy citizenship in the kingdom of heaven. For I'm beginning to understand how foolish it would be to go to hell and I've determined to be good enough to enter the kingdom of heaven. You know perfectly well that none of those things would work.

You can't stray into the kingdom. You can't wander into the kingdom. You can't earn citizenship in the kingdom.

Citizenship in the kingdom of God is by birth. So with that, things that have happened. Let's turn to the passage in John chapter 2. Some of you may have read this correctly.

Some of you may not have done so. But we're looking to begin here at verse 23 in the second chapter of John. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover during the feast, many believed in his name.

Beholding his signs, which he was doing. But Jesus, on his part, was not entrusting himself to them. For he knew all men.

And because he did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man. For he himself knew what was in man. Now let's think carefully about what that said.

Christ is in Jerusalem when he's teaching and preaching. And then this crowd of people said, oh well, we're convinced that you're the Messiah. We've seen all these incredible things you have done.

But it says very plainly, on his part, Jesus refused to commit himself to them. Why do you think that's so? Well, I do. Have you any idea why that's so? I'm asking you, and I've been very pleased to help you determine to think this through more of its truth.

The field that many people have is that if you could just see some great miracle, it would enable you to believe. Well, these people saw great miracles. They saw Jesus do incredibly wonderful things.

But Jesus, on his part, was refusing to commit himself to them, as it says, because he knew what was in their hearts. Now, face this simple truth. People are not born again by seeing miracles.

Indeed, people are not born again by anything they do. Now, keep in mind that simple statement, it says, Jesus knew what was in their hearts, so he did not commit himself to them. Now, let's move to the third chapter, keeping those words in chapter two in mind.

There was a man in the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to him, that is, to Christ, by night, and he said to him, Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher, for no one can do the science that you do, unless God is with you. Now, ask this question.

Did Jesus commit himself to Nicodemus? We already read in chapter two he didn't commit himself to Christ. Did Jesus commit himself to Nicodemus? Do you think so? Do you realize how inconsistent Christ would be if he had done that? And suppose... I don't know who you are, but I'm sorry to say, but let me speak to you. Are you a brother or a sister? Now, suppose you tell me one thing, and I accept it, I don't believe a word you say, that you'd rather tell me the same exact thing.

It's great, it's great, I'm glad to hear it. Would it be inconsistent if I rejected what you said and accepted what he said? Now, both of these, the crowd in chapter two and the individual in chapter three make the same claim. We believe it because of these miracles that we have done.

Now, if Christ had accepted one and not the other, he wouldn't be a teacher worth listening to. He wouldn't be a savior that gives a child. He would be the kind of person that showed possibility.

Now, Nicodemus was a well-known man. He was a native teacher in Jerusalem, perhaps even a wealthy man. Many of the members of the council in Jerusalem were wealthy.

If Christ had accepted Nicodemus because he was powerful or well-known or wealthy and he had rejected the crowd because they were poor and the people of no importance in Jerusalem, it would have been a gross inconsistency. But the simple truth is, Christ accepted the claim of neither the larger group nor the individual. Look at verse 3. Jesus said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of man, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Now, I mentioned briefly that there are two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. So, Jesus is telling this prominent religious teacher, you can't even see the kingdom of God unless you're born of man. Now, that's a problem with a great many people in churches across America.

They don't really know that there are two kingdoms. They've heard about Calvary and they've heard about hell and the idea of going to hell is not a pleasant idea and they're not all that keen about going to heaven but it sounds better to go to heaven than to go to hell. So, they say, they're Christians.

But the truth is, it is impossible for a person who is to pray to see the kingdom of God. In order to see the kingdom of God, something has to happen instantly. Then, instead of saying to Jesus, that is, instead of Nicodemus saying that to Jesus, I don't care, look at what he said in verse 4. How can a man be born when he's old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born empty.

So then, Jesus is found for his father. Truly, I say to you, unless one is born water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. So the first statement is, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

The second statement is, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Now, just put yourself in Nicodemus' shoes. Suppose you were actually in the face of a conversation with Jesus.

And you said to him, I've been watching and hearing about these wonderful miracles, and I want you to know that I believe in you. And he looked at you with a very stern glance, and he said to you, you can't even see the kingdom of God. Now suppose I had actually asked you, what would your response have been? Have you any idea? Have you any idea how it would be? Well, you may not know how you would respond, but you should know how you should respond.

If you don't know what the teacher's talking about, why not ask him to explain himself? Surely you understand that the purpose of teachers is to convey information that's vital to you. If you don't get it, ask. Nicodemus could have said, now look, I don't know what you're talking about.

Would you please explain it? No, he didn't do that. He didn't ask any questions that would be worth asking. He merely raises an objection by saying, I don't see how a man can be born a second time when he's old.

He shouldn't. I don't get it. Explain it to me.

Help me, Victor. This is an urgent matter. Now, why didn't he say something like that? Oh, Jesus, explain it.

He didn't even know there was a teacher. You don't ask questions about something that's far, you know, doesn't even exist, you know. To become earnest about the matter, that means absolutely nothing to you.

Now, look at how this conversation proceeds. After saying, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Jesus says, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.

Now, what did he mean in verse 5 when he said, unless one is born of water and of the spirit? I'm a little bit clicky on the file. I'm not going to move on, but if I get a response, I'll give it. What did Jesus mean when he said, unless one is born of water and of the spirit? Would you like to take a cut? Anyone willing? I thought I heard something.

This is going in that spiritual direction. Yes, that's quite easy, really, because the next verse makes it clear. Look again at the next verse.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the spirit is spirit. Very clearly, he's referring to this verse, but when he says, born of water and of the spirit, what does he mean when he says, born of water? Speak up.

The baptism? That would be a reasonable thing to speculate concerning. Does baptism lead to new birth? No, I mean, if he said it would be an awfully dumb thing to say if he knew it wasn't true. But nonetheless, that's the interpretation.

Now, I know this is a bit delicate, and I have to be careful, but most of you are old enough to understand that when a child is born, he's in his mother's womb, and there's a bag of waters that burst, and then the child emerges. Physical birth is described as a water birth in that sense. The Apostles cannot refer to baptism.

Jesus has clearly said, two births are necessary. Physical birth and spiritual birth. Born of water.

Born of the Spirit. So, Nicodemus, even though you're old, even though you're recognized as the teacher in Jerusalem, even though you're a man of some prestige and well-known, the simple truth is you cannot even see, and certainly you cannot enter the Kingdom of God unless you're born again. So, for a sinner, don't marvel that I sent you.

You must be born again. Now, as I pointed out already, Nicodemus isn't asking the kinds of questions that you ought to ask. Christ is giving you answers for questions he hasn't even asked.

Look at verse 8. The wind blows where it wishes. And you hear the sound of that. But you do not know where it comes from and where it goes.

So is everyone who is born of the Spirit. Now, what does that mean? Well, we all know that we can see the effect of the wind. We can look out when the wind is howling.

We can see the branches bending, the trees eaten, bending when you have big storms like you had some of in this area in the last month or so. You can see roads, the roads, houses utterly destroyed. You can see pictures of a heavy automobile up on top of a roof of a building after it collapsed.

You know the wind has incredible power. But you don't really stand there and say, oh, I know exactly where that wind came from. And I know for sure where that wind is coming in.

Well, obviously we don't know that. We can see the effect of the wind, but we have no ability to accurately trace it and map out where it's going to flow next. So Nicodemus does make a response that's at least a little pertinent in this map.

He says to him, how can these things be? That's when Jesus answers, are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand himself? Truly, truly I say to you, we speak that which we know and we bear witness of that which we have seen and we do not receive our witness. He adds in verse 12, I told you earthly things and you do not believe. How shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? Now, here is the question.

You're listening carefully, aren't you? I hope so. Here's the question. What does a person do to be born again? Who's prepared to tell me? What does a person do to be born again? Jesus has made it crystal clear, you're not born again.

You cannot see the King of God. You cannot enter the Kingdom of God. What do you have to do to be born again? It has to be at God's word.

It's the call of the church. Yeah. You can't do that without God's.

Now, here's something to pay close attention to. You're young and obvious with your church. At the moment, maybe your father did a job in California and you love him.

Who said you're off the college and end up going to another church? Most of the church teaches that when a person repents and believes, they're born again. I want to ask you to give that very careful attention. Let me repeat what I just said.

Most of the churches in South America teach that if you repent and believe, you will be born again. Now, here's the good news God put on the What's wrong with that idea? From the practice itself, one is clearly wrong about that interpretation. John Martin mentioned good answer.

Tell us now what's wrong with that interpretation? Make yourself born again. You couldn't make yourself born again. Let's just look at it this way.

Is Jesus a dumb teacher or a wise teacher? Now, I'm not making any pretense about what I'm going to say. Do you realize that you have in front of you the finest teacher that ever was? I'm not making any stupid statements about that. But, I dare to tell you I don't make parallels out of non-parallels.

I don't like two things that are entirely different and the same. I'm not all that smart, but I'm smart enough to know how foolish that is. Now, in this passage, Jesus is drawing parallels.

Jesus is drawing a parallel between physical birth and spiritual birth. So, if he's drawing a parallel between physical birth and spiritual birth, there's got to be a parallel. Now, you've got ground here.

At what point did you command your parents to give you the net? This kind of happened. Would you say it had anything to do with your physical structure? The color of your eye? The power of your brain? What input did you have in your physical birth? None. I mean, we all know.

We didn't have any input into our physical birth. Now, if you've got a parallel, you can't have no input into physical birth and some input into spiritual birth. It doesn't work.

It's just a spot. The whole picture of Christ is gone. Gone.

That's why Jesus said to Nicodemus, you can't even see the kingdom. Certainly you can't end the kingdom. Now then, does that leave us in a charitable fix? Does that mean there's no hope of our being free? Because there's nothing we can do about that.

Are we doomed forever because we can't make it happen? Well, let's ask ourselves what really happens when a person is born again? And we can think again about this in the beginning. What was Jesus saying needed to happen again? Now, remember his first statement to the point. If a man is not born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

So, the first thing we know that had to happen to Nicodemus was the eyes that he had in his head that could see money, that could see crowds, that could see the class in front of him that he was teaching, those eyes couldn't see the kingdom of God. Something had to happen to his eyes in order for him to see the kingdom of God. If you look with any great care at these verses we've just gone over, what impact do you think Jesus' words had on the beginning? At any point, as a prioritist, I suggested earlier, Hey, help me! Don't you see I'm in trouble here? I'm not getting it! No.

It all just passes off him as if it were inconsequential. So, something had to happen to his eyes and to his ear so that he actually heard what Christ was saying. Do you remember that in the Bible, Jesus says they have eyes to see and they do not see.

They have ears to hear and they do not hear. They have hearts. But, they are hearts of stone.

When a person is born again, their blind eyes are replaced with the eyes that see. They get ears to hear. They can hear and the heart of stone is removed and the heart of light is placed there.

Now, remember the word of Christ. You were born in mighty bad circumstances. You're told throughout your life to be part of the kingdom of God unless God in his mercy gives you the eyes that see and ears that hear and the heart that responds to that.

Now, Pastor John expressed concern and he opened the meeting because some of you don't seem to have taken hold. It seems you have gotten really serious. I wonder if you understand that throughout the history of the world there have been many, many occasions when young people like yourselves have totally changed the course of history.

When I look around here, I don't see just a group of young people. I see the whole world turned upside down by a group of young people who have eyes that work and ears that hear and hearts that are flesh and they said, I'm not willing to watch my nation be perished. I'm not willing to see multitudes of people washed washed into hell.

I am determined to change that. All the great works in the past that we describe as revival have been profoundly influenced by people in your age group. Perhaps you don't have any idea how important you are to what God wants to do, but your pastor sees that important, and this old man who's here for a week sees that important.

I see this nation transformed through human life, and that's not so at all. That's the way God works. So we are very, very concerned that every person in this room be born again.

Some of you, by God's grace, have that. Others of you have not. It's the burden of the church that everyone of you will truly be born again.

Now some of you have seen just a little bit of the Kingdom of God. Not enough, perhaps, to have really motivated you, but when one is born again, does that make them Christian? What do you think? Well, you seem a little slow in responding to this, or I don't want to criticize you. I think it's wise to be cautious, not to make statements that you wish a few minutes later you hadn't made.

But when a person begins to realize that there are two kingdoms, and when one begins to sense something of the difference between these two kingdoms, then there is a responsibility that comes upon that person, a twofold responsibility. First, to repent, and second, to believe. Now, I might be wrong, but I have a theory that a good number of you who have not yet really cast their lives upon Christ have some measure of awareness of these two kingdoms.

But I wonder, do you really see how urgent it is to join Christ, to commit your life to Christ, to turn from everything in your life that hinders you? Now, I'm not pretending that I'm your own, apart from the help of the Holy Spirit, that you will be able to see or hear or will to testify of Christ. But once you begin to realize that indeed there are two kingdoms, that you were born to pray, that you cannot be anything other than you prayed, unless you are born again, you begin to sense some urgency, some desire, you begin to feel some responsibility, you begin to say to yourself, I'm not willing, I don't want to die as I was born. I want to be forgiven of my sin, I want to serve Christ.

When you come to that point, then, as I said already, two things unamplified and to believe. Now, what do those terms really mean to you? So let's go back to where we started. There's the door to know that.

And you say to yourself, that is not actually a door to know that. That's the door to pleasing Christ. That's the door that will give tremendous meaning and consequence to all life.

I've got to get through that door. But your capacity keeps you wandering around feeling different things and keeps you from God, you know, straight life. But repentance is where you stand.

I am done going my way. I have turned out. I'm going to go God's way.

You remember that Jesus described two roads. He said there was a broad road that leads to destruction. And there's a narrow road that leads to life eternal.

He also taught how to change. So I'm not going to call that anymore the door to know that. I'm going to call that the straight gate.

Now straight, not spelled s-t-r-a-r-g-h-t but s-t-r-a-r-g-h-t s-t-r-a-r-g-h-t notice the difference between the two. What's the difference between s-t-r-a-r-g-h-t and s-t-r-a-r-g-h-t Yes, the straight s-t-r-a-r-g-h-t is narrow. It's long.

Now that door which we just named the straight gate you could actually march through that door with your head high. But the true straight gate you can't march through with your head high. In order to get through the straight gate, which is both narrow and long you've got the homework.

You've got to say everything I have said is worth reading now. Getting through that straight gate and walking on that narrow way is the most urgent and consequential thing I could possibly do, and I'll do it no matter what it costs. Repentance is something that you actually think about.

And you say, I don't want to end my life as I began. I don't want all my life to be wandering about. I am determined to repent whatever it costs.

I'm going to do that. And repentance goes with faith. Repentance is turning from yourself to sin your own way.

It's linked with faith. Turning toward Christ. And in a persevering fashion, going on and on and on trusting Christ, living all out in Christ.

While you cannot make yourself alive, God can make you alive. He's enabled you to see the continuum. And then to determine it would be crazy to remain in the kingdom of God, to remain self-centered, to remain indifferent to Christ.

I must turn from all hindrances and follow Christ. Have you really done that? As I've said already, you don't inherit the kingdom of God. You don't buy your way into it.

You don't earn the kingdom of God. And the Spirit of God has enabled you to see these two kingdoms. He calls upon you to turn your back on yourself.

Stop being so foolish! And turn your face to Christ. And follow Him. Now that is what each of us should be doing.

And that's what we will be grateful for we have done when we think we have. And what it will take is someone here to simply say, no, I'm not looking. I don't want that.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Q1890iur8gQ.mp4>

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