

Born Again!

The Miracle of New Spiritual Life

Church January 22, 2023

Part 4- The *Need* for the New Birth- *Continued*

2Corinthians 3:18-4:6:

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,

2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

*To the Glory of God the Holy Father; God the Holy Son; and God the Holy Spirit.
Amen.*

Now last time- I told you that as you ponder the great Mystery of the Miracle of the New Birth- I want to try to present to you exactly what happens to us as this new, spiritual Life comes to us in four concise Statements:

1. The New Birth is us *receiving* new, spiritual "Life"- NOT new "Religion"
2. The New Birth is us personally *experiencing* supernatural Transformation- NOT merely *believing* in it
3. It is in the New Birth where God give us the Gifts of both "Love *for* God" and "Faith *in* God"

4. The New Birth does NOT make the “Old Man” *better*- it is the *creation* of a “New Man”

... and we began by looking at the first one:

1. The New Birth is us receiving new, spiritual “Life”- NOT new “Religion”

What happens in the New Birth is NOT us getting new “Religion” but receiving new, spiritual “Life.” Read with me **John 3:1-3**:

1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;

2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The Apostle John makes sure that we know that Nicodemus is a Pharisee; and a Ruler of the Jews. And the Pharisees were the most rigorously Religious of all the Jewish groups. And yet, to this one, Jesus said (in verse 3),

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

... and even more personally in verse 7:

“You must be born again.”

So, one of John’s Points was: ALL of Nicodemus’s Religion; ALL of his amazing Pharisaic Study and Discipline and Law-keeping; COULD NOT fill the NEED he had (from the moment of his Conception) for new, spiritual Life. And here is the spiritual Principle:

Human Flesh CANNOT produce the Spirit of God

We CANNOT *manufacture* God’s Spirit; nor can we *manipulate* God to “act” or “move” the Way we want Him to. We can’t “*gin up*” God’s Spirit as though we are in Control. Now we can shout; and jump; and get excited- but a *real* Spirit-birthed “Revival”; or a *genuine* “Awakening”; or a *true* “spiritual Refreshing” or an *orthodox* “Move” of God’s Spirit- is a sovereign Act of God.

Always has been; and always will be. We don't *produce* Revivals and so, it is silly for Churches to schedule a Revival in advance as though they know when and how God is going to move in the future.

And that means that Revivals do NOT flow out directly from our Music. If anything, it's the ongoing and accurate and full Teaching and Preaching of God's Word- that brings about a genuine hatred of Sin- along with a healthy Fear of the Lord- that *allows* for sovereign Revivals to come and flourish.

And the New Birth is the *ultimate* in a personal, individual, spiritual Revival. It is the very Essence of an Awakening; and it bears all of the Fruit of the *larger* "Revivals" that *radically* and *permanently* transformed entire Cities; Regions; and even Nations. The only difference is the New Birth affects only one soul at a time rather than many. But the New Birth changes us- *radically*- as individual souls. But it is no less *dramatic*; and no less *radical*; and no less *permanent*; than the *larger* Revivals that reach thousands and even millions.

We can't *cause* Revivals- but we CAN (and we should) make it where Revivals are *welcomed* rather than *rejected*. And so, things like Prayer; Fasting; and Bible Study- *even among the Lost*- will help prepare people infinitely more in regard to a true Revival and the New Birth- than does loud and fast Music.

So, even though God has to sovereignly choose to touch us- what we CAN do- is to earnestly plead with God to "*fill our Cups*"; "*rain down on our parched souls*" and to "*breathe on us*"- so we may love what He loves; and learn to hate what God hates. Because those are Signs that the people are being revived. And in that way- we will be in a *continual* Refreshing and be able to live a godly Life that will glorify our King.

So, at this point in his long life- Nicodemus was still "spiritually Dead." And all that he had so faithfully carried out his entire Life- didn't accomplish a single thing except illustrate his great NEED to be born again.

So, what Nicodemus *needed* then, and what you and I need today, is NOT "Religion"- but "Life." The whole Point of God the Holy Spirit, through the human writers, referring to this Miracle as a "*Birth*" is that it brings new Life- new *spiritual* Life- into people who do NOT already have ANY.

Now in one sense- Nicodemus is very much "Alive." He is breathing, thinking, feeling, and acting. And he is every bit a Human, created in God's Image.

But Jesus said he was completely "Dead"; and in great NEED for new spiritual "Life." And that means there was NO spiritual Life in Nicodemus- at all. None. So, *spiritually* speaking, this "Ruler of the Jews" was *entirely* "Unborn".¹

¹ For Jesus to say that this "Ruler of the Jews" was spiritually "Dead" proves that Nicodemus' Religion that he so faithfully adhered to and taught was NOT of God. It was entirely Man-made and was- in every way- a false Religion. It could NOT forgive a single Sin or save a single Soul. That also means that "pharisaical Judaism" (which is the Religion of conservative Jews today) is NOT an accurate or faithful exposition of the Old Testament. If it was- then Nicodemus would have, at least, understood *exactly* what Jesus was talking about- but he didn't.

So, what he NEEDED- was new *spiritual* “Life”- NOT more “religious Activities” or more “religious Zeal”. He already had plenty of that.

So, it is very important that we all realize that, at this Point- when you are dealing with Lost people- who have no spiritual Life existing within themselves- the Commandments of God; and the Precepts and Statutes of God’s Word are completely *useless*- other than to condemn them. Those wonderful, true, and holy Things of God’s Spirit- do NOT have the Power to create spiritual Life in the Lost person- either. The ONLY thing that the Commandments of God can do- is to prove how Lost a person is; and to illustrate their great NEED for the New Birth.

And that is the great Difference between the Old Covenant and the New. Under the *First* or the *Old* Covenant- God said to Man, “*IF you do this (obey His Commandments)- then I will bless you.*” So, the First or the Old Covenant was between God and Man. But what was the Result of that Covenant? It damned the entire human Race. Why? Because they were Lost and Fallen; and they could NOT obey God’s Commandments- without Fault.

So, in His Mercy- God gave us an infinitely *superior* Covenant. And this New Covenant in Jesus Christ- is a Covenant between God and Himself- in all three Persons of the Trinity. And that means that Man has NO input in this Covenant at all- except to *benefit* from it! So, in the New Covenant- God gets ALL the Glory; and we receive ALL the Benefit!

God- in all three Persons of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit *covenanted* with each other to do *to* us; and *in* us; and *with* us; and *for* us; and *through* us- what the Old Covenant could NEVER do! And that makes the New Covenant *infinitely* superior to the Old.

You recall what Jesus said in **Luke 9:60** to the man who wanted to put off following Jesus so he could go bury his father? Jesus said, “**Allow the dead to bury their own dead**”. And that means there are “physically Dead” people- who need burying. And there are also “spiritually Dead” people who can bury them. In other words, Jesus thought in terms of people who walk around with much apparent *physical* Life, and yet are *spiritually* Dead. And in His Parable about the prodigal son, the Father says, “**This son of mine was dead, and has come to life again**” (Luke 15:24).

And while Nicodemus might have understood all of the *nuances* of pharisaical Judaism- but, spiritually speaking- he was stone cold Dead. So, his “Religion” was completely worthless.

Now what happens in the Miracle of the New Birth is that Life “*comes into being*” that was NOT there before! And when that happens- spiritual Death is swallowed up in Victory!

You see, new Life is sovereignly *created* at the New Birth. So, this is NOT religious Activity; nor is it “humanly engineered Discipline.” This is also NOT

about an Act of the so-called “*free-Will of Man*” in *choosing* or “*making a Decision*” to be born again. This is also NOT about people “*accepting Jesus into their hearts*”. How can dead people choose or accept *anything*? Not only can dead people NOT choose or accept anything- they can’t even WANT to choose or accept anything!

The ONLY way that the normal Teaching about the New Birth could be true- is if we were NOT as Fallen as the Bible teaches that we are. So, if Adam’s Rebellion did NOT *radically* and *negatively* ruin every aspect of Human Existence- then all of this Man-made and unbiblical Teaching about how Lost people are born again might be true.²

But Adam’s Sin DID *ruin* us. And all Lost people ARE *totally* Depraved. And every single Aspect of Human Existence – *including* our “Nature”; and our “Will” and our “capacity to choose”- WAS *destroyed* in the Fall.³ And that means that far too much of what the modern Church teaches about the New Birth and how lost people *experience* this Miracle- is just flat out not true.

The New Birth is the “*coming into Being*” of Life that didn’t already exist. And like us- once that new spiritual Life came into contact with his spiritually dead soul- Nicodemus’ eyes and mind and heart were opened; and he was then both able and willing to do three things:

1. *Behold* the Glory of God in the Person [Face] of Jesus Christ
2. To *love* what he saw
3. To be *changed* into what he saw

... and that is *exactly* what the Apostle Paul was talking about in the Passage that was read to you at the beginning of this Sermon. So, please turn with me again to **2Corinthians 4:3&4:**

**3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

Here, the Apostle *infallibly* gives us the main Problem that ALL Lost people have:

² Of course, that would mean that the Bible is NOT true.

³ Lost and fallen people can choose and make Decisions all day long about earthly things. What the Fall of Adam ruined- was our capacity to voluntarily choose (or want) ANYTHING pertaining to God- absent a sovereign regeneration of the human Nature in the Miracle of the New Birth.

... the god of this world [satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving [Lost people] so that they might not see...

Now as far as I am concerned- this is one of the BEST Passages in the entire Bible that shows what is wrong with Lost people and what happens to them as they experience the Miracle of the New Birth. Here the Apostle Paul said that satan has blinded the minds of ALL Unbelievers. Why? So they will NOT see. See what?

... the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

... or it is put in another way in verse 6:

... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

... and as far as I know- satan doesn't mind Lost people "seeing" or "beholding" anything else. But he works very hard to keep Lost people Lost- by blinding their minds- so they will NOT see or behold or comprehend the "*Glory of God- in Christ*" or (put another way)- the "*Glory of Jesus Christ- who is God*". Why?

Because by really seeing the "Glory" of the risen Lamb- Lost people WILL *automatically* begin to LOVE what they see; and then they will begin a Process (that lasts throughout their entire Lives) to be *progressively* changed into what they see! And satan loses them FOREVER!

Now the phrase in verse 6, "**the Face of Christ**"- has to do with what another writer said in **Hebrews 1:3b**:

... He [Jesus] is the radiance of His glory ...

So, this unknown writer of the last third of the 1st Century wrote *infallibly* here that Jesus was the "**Radiance of God the Father's Glory**". And his Argument was that this applies ONLY to Jesus and NOT to the main Characters of the Old Testament like: Moses, Abraham, Joshua, or David. But he *also* argues that this is true about Jesus over and above Angels as well.

And this is very similar to what the Apostle John wrote in **John 1:14**, when he said,

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

... so, the Purpose as to *why* the Word was "made Flesh" and dwelt among us- was so that we could "see" the Glory of God! Which is *exactly* what the "god of this world" works so hard to prevent. So, the 1st Coming of Jesus Christ to this earth

was to make the Glory of God- available for Sinners to “see” it- because THAT is what changes them!

And John’s Argument that the Word that was “*with*” God; and the Word that “*was*” God- is the One- Who took on human Flesh and appeared to John and the other Apostles. And John said that he and the other Apostles, “**saw His Glory**”. And then John said that the Glory they saw was “**as of the only begotten from the Father**”.⁴ And then John explained what he meant by that Phrase- by saying that Jesus was “**full of Grace and Truth**”- which means that Jesus was SO full of Grace and so full of Truth that there was NOT any room for anything else in Jesus EXCEPT Grace and Truth- which is simply another way of talking about the pristine and perfect Glory of God- that Jesus displayed.

And that gives us insight into how we are supposed to understand the “*Glory of God*” that we are *supposed* to see in the “*Face*” or in the “*Person*” of Jesus Christ. The word, “*Glory*” is defined as:

The Renown; Honor; Fame; Prestige; Distinction; Eminence; Acclaim; Beauty Magnificence; Splendor; Grandeur; Greatness; Importance; or Blessedness of something or someone.

So, the “**Glory of God**” is all of that pertaining to God. Another way of understanding this is to say that the “**Glory of God**” is the *summation* of all of the Characteristics and Attributes that make God to be “God”. Yet another way of comprehending this is to say that the “**Glory of God**” is the Holiness of God- *seen-as it radiates out from Him!*

Now I’m NOT talking about a “Halo”- as ancient Christian Art shows. Those artists were simply trying to put the words of Scripture into a form that the

⁴ the phrase, “**the only begotten of the Father**” is actually a poor translation of the Greek here. And that poor translation has allowed Cults to capitalize on what the English word, “*begotten*” means to help bring millions of people into Deception. The literal Greek for this phrase reads, “We beheld the Glory of Him- a Glory of an only begotten from Father” ... which does NOT mean that Jesus was “*begotten*” in the sense of being “born” or “created” at a certain point in Time. So, I hope you can see that simply translating the Greek into the English didn’t fix the Problem. We also need to define the word, “*begotten*”. We need to remember that most of the Cults were formed during a time that the most common English translation around the entire world was the *King James Version*. And in the King James Version of the Bible- the word, “*begat*” is found 225 times in 139 verses- of which the *overwhelming* majority are talking about human beings and NOT Jesus. And the word, “*begotten*” is found 24 times. For example, “**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1Peter 1:3KJV); 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. (1John 5:1KJV) 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. (1John 5:18KJV) ...** which gave the Cults ammunition over a misunderstanding of the words, “*begat*” and “*begotten*”. This is one reason why we should use the NASB95. They have given a more reliable translation and they translated the verses to help us get a better understanding of what the inspired Writer meant when he used those words. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1Peter 1:3NASB95); Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. (1John 5:1NASB95); We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. (1John 5:18NASB95) ...** which tells us that the original MEANING of what Peter and John meant was to discuss the Power of the New Birth over Sin- and NOT that we are “*begotten*” in the same way as Jesus was. So, even though, as fully and truly Man, Jesus was “born” to Mary- as fully and truly God- Jesus was NOT “created”- because BEFORE He was “born”- He was in Heaven with God (as the Word) and was ALWAYS “with” God and “was” God. So, the BEST understanding of this Phrase, is that Jesus was (and is)... “the ONE and ONLY of the Father”.

mind could comprehend. God's Glory *radiates* out from Him (like the beams of the sun)- when He "manifests"; or "displays"; or "shows"; or "reveals"; one or more of His pristine Characteristics or Attributes.

For example, when God "CAUSES" the Lost to be born again (**1Peter 1:3**)- He is displaying several of His Own, Personal, Attributes (ie. Grace; Mercy; Omnipotence; Love, etc.). So, the *ultimate* PURPOSE behind WHY God sovereignly causes us to be born again- is so that we will "Behold"; or "See"; or "Comprehend" HOW and WHY God is doing that great Act- and we will then magnify and praise and honor and glorify and worship; and adore; and be in awe of- Him!

But the KEY- is that we must SEE! We must BEHOLD! We must COMPREHEND! or UNDERSTAND! So, NOTHING happens to spiritually Dead people until they see. But we CAN'T "see" precisely because satan...

... has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see...

So, THAT is the main Problem of ALL of lost Humanity. It is a Problem of "Seeing"; of "Beholding"; and of "Comprehending" or "Understanding" WHO Jesus is- in His risen Glory. And that is why lost people see Christianity as being nothing but a bunch of boring Rules that have nothing to do with their Lives. And they see God as being a "kill-joy" Who exists for no other reason than to pour cold water on everything they enjoy. Now why do they think like this? Because satan has blinded their minds- and they have never once beheld God in His Glory.

So, the main thing that is wrong with every single Lost person on earth- is NOT a lack of Money or Education or a lack of Opportunity- as the Sociologists teach. The main thing that is wrong with every single lost person on earth- is that their MINDS have been blinded by satan- to prevent them from seeing God's Glory- which is *guaranteed* to change them so much- that it will cause them to love God and to be changed more and more- into His Image and Likeness! And so, all that Paul is illustrating in **2Corinthians** is simply another way of understanding what being Lost looks like; as well as what the New Birth does to us.

Okay, so what does God HAVE to do- if anyone in that Condition is to be delivered from their spiritual Blindness and be saved? Well, God has to act- ALL BY HIMSELF to give them Life. And that new Life will open their Minds and their Eyes. But why does God have to move all by Himself? Why can't we *want* Him to do this; or why can't we *cooperate* with Him in this; or even more- why can't we *cause* the New Birth to happen all by ourselves?

Because in that lost and fallen Condition- we are Dead. And that means we can't contribute *anything* to our own Deliverance- except the Blindness that made our Deliverance necessary. We are so spiritually Dead- we can't even WANT to be delivered!

So, BEFORE anything else happens to us- BEFORE we can love God; BEFORE we can desire God; BEFORE we can be convicted of Sin; BEFORE we can repent; and BEFORE we can trust in Jesus and in His finished Work- we must FIRST be given Eyes that can see; Ears that can hear; a Heart that can believe; and a Mind that can comprehend- the Glory of God.

So, BEFORE anyone can hate their Sin; BEFORE they can pray and cry out to God for Forgiveness- they must FIRST behold the Majesty; or the Brilliance; or the Worth; or the Importance; or the Beauty; or Magnificence of God!

Now WHY is that true? Because until we see the Comparison; until we behold the Distinction; the Contrast; or the Difference between the risen Christ- in His Glory- and ourselves- in our filthy Sin- we don't realize how Evil we really are. And unless we see that great Gulf between us and God- we have no idea of just how *deserving* of Damnation we really are. And until we behold the Difference between us and Jesus- we are ignorant of how Wonderful and Valuable Jesus is.

So, that is what happens in the New Birth. Look again at the *first* part of verse 6:

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts...

Now at what Point in History did God say, "**Light shall shine out of Darkness**"? At Creation! Look at what Moses infallibly wrote about 1450 years *before* Jesus was born in **Genesis 1:3**:

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

God spoke- and *instantly*- Light was *created*! So, Light was "*formed*"; Light "*came into Being*"; God "*made*" Light- *ex-nihilo*- out of NOTHING but the Voice of God! So, all three Persons of the Trinity were involved in this. God the Holy Spirit took the spoken Word (Jesus) of God the Father- and created Reality from it. So, what was the Result of God speaking?

... there was light

It worked! Light instantly *displaced* the Darkness! Light

immediately overcame the Blindness that was caused by the Darkness! Light had miraculous and total Victory over the dark Blindness!

And Paul went on to tell us here in verse 6- that this God that created Light in the Beginning with just His spoken Word- is...

... the One who has shone in our hearts...

God is the One- ALL BY HIMSELF- without any help or cooperation from us. God has shone into our hearts (that are already dark and black and corrupt by the Fall of Adam and our own individuals Sins)- and BEFORE we repent; BEFORE we turn from Sin; BEFORE we pray and ask; and BEFORE we have the capacity to even WANT this...

... God *sovereignly* shines into our dead, sinful, fallen hearts!

... How? By and Through the Preaching of the Gospel- or the Word of God as it is spoken!

So, as the Word of God is spoken (preached/taught/heralded)- God the Holy Spirit takes that Word and *supernaturally* creates- *ex-nihilo*- Reality! And the formerly Dead soul now beholds the Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Jesus- Who is the Image of God! So, that spiritually dead person now “sees” the Glory of God in the Person of Jesus- because he now possesses spiritual Life!

But this new Life does NOT merely allow the individual to see that Glory one time. Seeing the Glory of God is ongoing. And as time goes on- that Vision also gets clearer and clearer. But seeing is also only the *first* Step. So, “*seeing*” the Glory of God in Jesus *automatically* births a very *powerful* and *ever-increasing* Love for God and for the “**Things of the Spirit of God**” (1Corinthians 2:14) in that individual. And that newly created Love- then *facilitates* an *ongoing* and *progressive* Transformation in that individual into the Image and Likeness of the Glory of Jesus that he now sees and loves! And that is what Paul meant when he said this in 2Corinthians 3:18:

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

So, IN THE WAY that God spoke His Word into Darkness and created Light that did not previously exist- that is the way God now shines into the hearts of all His chosen- but yet unsaved elect- as they hear the Gospel being preached.

TO WHAT END? Supernatural and Miraculous Light shines into our hearts as the Gospel is heralded- our eyes are opened; and we have new, spiritual Life! So, at this point- we are now born again. And what is the Result of being born again? What happens when we see the Glory of God; or the Worth of God; or the Importance of God; or the Majesty of God; or the Brilliance of God- in the Person of Jesus Christ?

We *immediately* see and behold and comprehend and understand the great Contrast between the risen Lord in His Glory; and our filthy souls. And when that happens- two other human Responses or two other human Results *automatically* happen:

1. We love what we see (Jesus)
2. We are smitten with Conviction

... and BOTH of those “Results” or “Responses” are the Fruit or the Proof; or the Result; or the Response to now possessing this new, spiritual Life.

Loving what we see- causes us to pursue after Jesus; to search for Him; to desire to be close to Him; to enjoy obeying Him; to want to dwell with Him forever; and to desire to abide in Him continually. And this is what theologians call, “*Union with Christ*”. And it is the *automatic* Result of already experiencing the Miracle of the New Birth.

So, what does this “*Union with Christ*” bring forth? The “*Gift of saving Faith*”. And what does that Gift look like? A Desire and an Ability to trust in Jesus- *personally*; and to trust in His finished Work; The Ability to believe that God is NOT a Liar. The Power to have Faith in God; and in what God says. And the Desire to agree with God’s Word. And this is all part of the *unarguable* Proof that you have, in fact, experienced the Miracle of the New Birth.

Now while all of that is going on- you are also smitten with *powerful* Conviction. And that Conviction gives you both the Power and the Desire to truly HATE your Sin; to violently cast it off; to get away from it; to throw it down; and to trample it under your feet. And six hundred years before Jesus was born- the golden tongued Prophet put it this way in **Isaiah 30:22**:

And you will defile your graven images overlaid with silver, and your molten images plated with gold. You will scatter them as an impure thing, and say to them, “Be gone!”

... and this is what “*hating Sin*” looks like. And this Gift of “*loving what God loves*” and “*hating what God hates*”- is *also* part of the *unarguable* Proof that you have, in fact, experienced the Miracle of the New Birth.

But this Gift also results in true and genuine “*Repentance*”- which is the ongoing and continual “*turning away from Sin*”- FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!

So, the Miracle of the New Birth gave you new spiritual Life. And that new Life brings about several Responses. And two of those Responses are:

1. The Desire and Ability to trust and hope and believe in Jesus and in His finished Work (**Faith**)
2. The Desire and Ability to hate Sin and turn from it (**Repentance**)

So, both Faith and the hatred of Sin- are *born* within the New Birth. That’s where they come from. Faith does NOT normally or naturally exist inside the individual who is Lost and Fallen. That was destroyed in the Fall of Adam. The Bible teaches that, as lost individuals, we *love* our Sin. Now we don’t enjoy the *Penalty* for our Sin (Humiliation; Disease; financial Hardship; Death, etc.)- but we *love* our Sin. So, if we could find a way to sin against God and escape the Penalty- we would.

Both the Desire and the Ability to put all of your Hope and Trust in Jesus personally and in His finished Work (Faith)- AND a powerful and growing Hatred for Sin (Repentance)- are given to us as gracious Gifts to the individual in the Miracle of the New Birth.

And the Reason that both of these are given to us as a Gift inside the New Birth- is that BOTH of these are REQUIREMENTS that bring about the NEXT “Step” in Salvation called: “*Justification*.”⁵

Now “*Justification*”- is where the one who has *already* experienced the Miracle of the New Birth is forgiven for ALL Sins (Past, Present, and Future) and is instantly and permanently “*made Righteous*”. But *unlike* the New Birth- Justification is NOT a sovereign Act of God alone. Justification is a *cooperative* Act of both Man and God. In order to be Justified- we use the Gift of Faith that we were given in the New Birth and we *believe*; we *trust*; or we place our Hope in Jesus *personally* and in His finished Work. And we also use the Gift of a “hatred for Sin” and we “repent”- or we “turn away from” all Sin.

So, Justification is where God forgives us of all Sin; and it is where God takes the spotless Righteousness of Jesus and “imputes” or “credits” that Righteousness to us- by the Agency of Faith alone. And it is this Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness that makes us “just as Righteous as God Himself”- which is what allows us to enter into Heaven.

Now both the New Birth and Justification are *part* of the overall Process called, “*Salvation*” and are Requirements for everybody. But they are NOT

⁵ There are at least 15 separate Steps in the “*Order of Salvation*” (Ordo Salutis).

“Salvation” by themselves. So, even though the terms of both the “New Birth” and “Justification” are routinely confused with “Salvation”- they are only part. So, when I say things like, “*I was ‘saved’ on June 25, 1971*”- what I SHOULD say is, “*I was born again and justified (and adopted) on June 25, 1971.*” And that is not merely being semantic. This matters- because for the last 51+ years AFTER I was born again and was justified (and adopted) that night- I am *still* being sanctified- which is the next Step in my Salvation.

So, the way to understand this is to say, “*While being Born Again and Justified (and Adopted) are individual and single ACTS of God- I am in the ongoing ‘Process’ of Sanctification and am still BEING Saved*”. And my Salvation will NOT be completed until my saved soul is *re-united* with a glorified body at the Resurrection. That is what the Bible teaches.

Now the “New Birth” and “Justification” and “Adoption” are all certainly very important Parts. But by themselves- they do NOT give us the full range or understanding of all that God has done in Salvation. Several things happened BEFORE I was born again; and several things happened AFTER I was born again. And ALL of them were needed in order for me to be saved.

2.The New Birth is us personally *experiencing* supernatural Transformation- NOT merely *believing* in it

Now I have told you many times that there are passages and verses in the Bible that we are to simply believe. We are to take these biblical Facts and just accept them as being Divine Truth. But there are other verses and Passages that we are to personally *experience* and not merely accept as being true.

And so, what happens in the New Birth is NOT merely *affirming* the Supernatural in Jesus- but actually and personally *experiencing* the Supernatural in *yourself*. Here is what I mean. In **John 3:2**, Nicodemus said,

"Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

In other words, Nicodemus saw in Jesus a genuine Divine Activity. He confessed that Jesus was from God. He acknowledged that Jesus did the Works of God.

Yet Jesus does NOT respond by saying, “*I wish everyone in Palestine could see the Truth that you see about Me.*” Instead, He said, “**You must be born again or you will never see the Kingdom of God.**”

And from that we conclude that: seeing Signs and Wonders; being rightfully amazed at them; and even giving the miracle Worker credit for them- that both them and He are from God- saves NOBODY! That is one of the great Dangers that go along with Signs and Wonders: You don't need a new Heart to be amazed at them. The old, fallen human Nature is all that's needed to be amazed at Signs and Wonders. And the old, fallen human Nature is very willing to say that the miracle Worker is from God.

The devil himself knows that Jesus is the Son of God and works Miracles (**Mark 1:24**). And the Result is that even demons- the fallen Angels, who have no Hope of ever being forgiven- shudder in Fear (**James 2:19**).

So, Nicodemus, seeing Jesus as a miracle Worker sent from God is NOT the Key to him being able to enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus said,

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)

In other words, what matters MOST is NOT merely *agreeing* with the Supernatural in Jesus- but in actually *experiencing* the Supernatural in yourself- personally- in the New Birth. So, yes- the New Birth is Supernatural- NOT Natural. And yes- the New Birth CANNOT be accounted by things that are already found in this world. **John 3:6** emphasizes the supernatural Nature of the New Birth:

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

The Flesh is “WHO we are”- *naturally*. The Spirit of God is the supernatural Person- Who brings about the New Birth. And Jesus says this again in verse 8:

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

... which means that the Spirit is NOT a part of this natural world. He is *above* Nature- above what is “Natural.” So, He is “*super-natural*.” Indeed, He is God. And He is the immediate *Cause* of the New Birth.

So, Jesus told Nicodemus that what happens in the New Birth is NOT merely affirming the Supernatural in Him- but actually and personally *experiencing* the Supernatural in himself. So, it isn't enough to believe that the New Birth is a Miracle from God. We must personally experience that Miracle- or

we will never even see the Kingdom of Heaven. Because we are all “spiritually Dead” at our natural Birth- we all MUST be born again.

And so, we are NOT to understand this Statement by Jesus in a “*metaphorical or natural Way*”- but SOLELY in a “*supernatural and miraculous Way*.” God the Holy Spirit MUST come upon you; and go inside of you and create new, spiritual Life into existence.

3. It is in the New Birth where God give us the Gifts of both “Love” and “Faith”

One of the greatest Mistakes of most Teaching concerning Evangelism in the modern American Church; and one of the things that *misleads* people most of all- is that we tend to think and teach in such a way that the Elements of both “Faith *in* God” and “Love *for* God”- already exist in the lost individual. They don’t. Lost people do NOT love God. And they *don’t* love God because they *can’t*. And they *can’t* love God because they don’t *want* to. So, whereas no lost person has within himself either the Desire or the Ability to genuinely love God- they are *personally* guilty for NOT loving God. Why? Because, *ultimately*, they do not love God because they choose not to.

And that Dilemma is called, “*Moral Inability*”. We are held Accountable by God for things we CANNOT do. And God is Just (Righteous) to hold us accountable- precisely because the Genesis of our Inability to obey God- is our sinful Disposition (Nature) that causes us to not WANT to. So, in that sense- it is the “*Want to*” of all Humanity that the New Birth fixes by *replacing* it with a new Disposition- or a new Nature that passionately *desires* to do God’s Will.

Secondly, we also think and teach that lost people already have the ability to believe in God and in what God has spoken. They don’t. Like our ability to Choose- people have Faith in; and they trust in things all day long. For example, Lost people believe that when they put their foot on the brakes- the car will stop. So, they absolutely can believe- but ONLY on a horizontal, natural, and earthly level. Lost people have NO Faith in God- nor in what God has said. And again, they *don’t* believe God because they *can’t*. And they *can’t*- because they don’t *want* to. So, again, ultimately, they are personally guilty of this too.

So, because both Faith and Love do NOT already exist within the lost individual- if anyone is to be saved- God has to sovereignly create both of these *for* him and *in* him. And God does that- in the Miracle of the New Birth. And that means that- even when a person begins to believe in Jesus- he is NOT *initiating* his own Justification. God has graciously given him both the Desire and Ability to trust in Him and in His Word- in the Miracle of the New Birth. And so, when the already born- again individual begins to trust in Jesus and in His finished Work in Justification- he is merely *responding* to the Gift that God has already given him.

So, even when we believe- ALL Glory and Honor and Praise goes to God- because all we are doing is *responding* to the Gift that God has already given.

And the same thing is true about Love for God and for the Things of the Spirit of God. Lost people love- yes. And they may love things very strongly and passionately. But lost people do NOT love God. And they don't love God because they can't. And they can't love God- because they don't want to. Look what Moses infallibly wrote about this in **Genesis 37:4** talking about Joseph:

His [Joseph] brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.

The Bible says that Joseph's brother *hated* him. And that Hatred *prevented* them; it stopped them from being able to speak to Joseph on friendly terms. How? They had a mouth; and a brain; and periodically, they did speak to Joseph. But they NEVER spoke to him in love. They couldn't- their Hatred wouldn't let them. So, their Hatred was so powerful that it caused them to NOT BE ABLE- to speak to Joseph in Love. And that is how this works with lost people and God. The insulting and humiliating (and even infuriating) Truths about ALL lost people is that not only do they NOT love God- they actually hate Him. And this sinful Hatred (that they got in the Fall) PREVENTS them from loving God.

Now my Goal in this Series is to allow all of us to understand what the New Birth is; how we are born again; and what the Results are- of us experiencing the Miracle of the New Birth. And part of the Reason I wanted to get into this at the start of this new Year- is so we would be *amazed* at what God has done in us and for us. And I want each of us to *savor* the Miracle of the New Birth and to be in *awe* of God's Grace and Mercy in *rescuing* us from our Fallen and spiritually Dead Condition by what He alone does for us.

Now we have already gone over 3 of the four things I want you to know. And Lord, willing, next week- I will address how the Gift of Love *for* God- that God gives us in the New Birth relates to the Gift of Faith *in* God- and putting all our Hope in Jesus personally and in His finished Work.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.