

Series: John

Title: How Are We Born?

Text: John 1: 4-13

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Subject: How are we born?

Speaking of the Word who was made flesh, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, John says,

John 1: 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Note the words “in him”—“*In him was life: and the life was the light of men.* All life and light are in Christ.

Colossians 1: 19: For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

The fulness of everything dispensed to his creatures is in Christ. In the Lord Jesus Christ is Life and Light. In Christ is both natural life and spiritual life, temporal life and eternal life. When we have his Life, we have Light (understanding): in Christ is both natural light and spiritual light. *In him* is the fulness of life: natural and spiritual, temporal and eternal—Christ is the Life of all the living. And the Life Christ is, is the Light: understanding, both natural and spiritual.

Every person that ever lived from Adam to the last, from Christ’s greatest enemy to his beloved apostle John, all were given life and light from Christ.

John 1: 9: That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

The non-elect, Christ never gives more than natural life and natural light. Adam passed on his corrupt nature so that we are born the first time spiritually dead in our nature under the curse and condemnation of the law. But even natural life is from Christ. Even natural understanding is from the Light of Christ. I am not suggesting the non-elect are in any way saved or partake of God’s mercies or grace. They do not! But every man is a debtor to God for even natural life and natural understanding. As spiritually dead and corrupt as we are by the sin of Adam we still get even natural life and light from Christ. But for the elect, Christ not only gives natural life and natural light, but Christ gives spiritual life and spiritual light.

Believer, understand this, all life and light that Christ gives in nature—to the unregenerate apostate—is subservient to, and for the good of, his spiritual kingdom and glory. That is amazing to think about! Right now, every spiritually dead, God-hating sinner who opposes Christ and his church with everything that is in them have their physical life and natural understanding from Christ himself. They cannot take their next breath to cuss him or us unless Christ gives it to them; they cannot devise one thought for or against us unless Christ gives them light to do it.

Jeremiah 10:23: O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Proverbs 16:1: The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

Proverbs 20:24: Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

But all fulness of spiritual Life and spiritual Light is given to God's elect who Christ redeemed from the curse of the law by his own blood. It is "spiritual life freely given". The Lord Jesus gives life to "as many as the Father has given Him". It is not earned or merited by us but spiritual life is the gift of God. It is the "life" of reconciliation—peace with God purchased by Christ for His people by "the blood of His cross". Christ laid down his life for the sheep alone. Christ reconciled to God each person for whom he died. They must and shall be brought into reconciliation with God in their experience of his grace. God said he shall not fail. It is the "life" which has no end—eternal life—"I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish". When Christ give us Life, he is our spiritual Light: the Life is the Light of those born of him

Proposition: Knowing Christ is the Life and Light of all men, the greatness of our depravity is seen in that when Christ sends his witness declaring who he is, we reject him until we are born of God.

Having told us of the glorious light of Christ, we then hear what we are and what we do while unregenerate—**John 1: 5: And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.**

We must be born of Life and Light. We must be born-again. So how are dead, dark sinners born again so as to have Life and Light and be the sons of God?

A MAN SENT FROM GOD

John 1: 6: There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

Christ sent John the Baptist. He was the forerunner of Christ. John was sent from Christ our God to bear witness of Christ. Think of that! God himself sent his own personal witness to bear witness that Christ is the Light.

God's preacher is a man sent from God. Every true preacher is a man sent from God. Not every preacher is a man sent from God! But every true preacher is a man sent from God. Christ promised to give us pastors after his own heart which shall feed us with knowledge and understanding (Jer 3: 15). How are we born? It begins by God sending a man. The greatest blessing ever given me was a man sent of God. Here is why.

A MESSAGE SENT FROM GOD

John 1: 7: The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8: He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

God sent John to bear witness that Christ alone is the Light. That is what a true witness is. He is sent of God to bear witness of Christ the Light. The man God sends will tell you as John the Baptist said, "I am not the Light. But I am sent to bear witness that Christ is the Light." God sends his witness that sinners, through him, might believe on Christ and be saved. He only saves through the preaching of Christ the Light (1 Cor 1: 21). How are we born? God sends his man with his message—the declaration that Christ is the Light!

LIFE AND LIGHT SENT FROM GOD

John 1: 9: *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10: He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11: He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12: 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 only thing sinners have to do is believe on Christ. Spiritual life, eternal life is theirs through merely believing God and resting in his Son. But here is where our depravity is magnified—*"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."*

Christ is every man's natural life and natural light. He came into the world that he himself made. But what is our reception of Christ? *"We knew him not."*

Even worse, Christ *"came unto his own and his own received him not."* He came to Israel. They were the one nation he had formed and given his oracles. Their fathers had told them how he called Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They had heard the truth of how Christ delivered them out of Egypt. They saw him on Mt Sinai and in the cloud and fire by night. He carried them through the wilderness to Canaan. The prophets bore witness of him for thousands of years. The very children of Israel who lived when Christ came claimed to be looking for him.

Yet, here is the depth of our sin and darkness—*"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."* No sinner can blame God for our own unbelief. Christ has given us natural life and natural understanding. Christ sent witness after witness declaring that Christ is the Life and the Light. He has preached to us that men might simply believe on him and be saved by him. But left to us *"we know him not and receive him not."* Does that not make us see how depraved we are!

John 3: 19: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

So how are we born? We must be born of God—*"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: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."*

In verse 12 the word "power" carries the meaning privilege. Indeed, it is the greatest privilege that exists to be a "son of God." The "privilege" can only be given by God. No one but God can give this authority and privilege.

But the translators correctly translated the word "power"—God alone gives ability to live! Spiritual life is by Christ the Life entering into a dead sinner. His Life is our Light. When he gives Life you live. When he gives Light you discern the truth. By Christ's power we can do nothing else but believe on Christ. In order to see the use of this word "power", notice how it is used elsewhere. Christ said,

Matthew 28:18: And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Matthew 10: 1: And when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

It is not an ability to choose or reject Christ as this world's false preachers claim. When you were born the first time you were given power to live so you breathed. You had no choice. The power to become the sons of God is the power to live when Christ becomes your life. It is the power to discern spiritual things when Christ becomes your Light. It is the power of a new will to believe on Christ when Christ makes you willing in the day of his power. This is the power to cry Abba, Father when the Spirit of his Son enters in and you are born a son of God. It is the power God the Father spoke of when he said to the Son,

Psalm 110:3: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning...

When God gives this power then you do what every new born son of God does, you receive Christ. That is what the verse means. The power came first from God. "*As many as received Christ*"—the reason they received him is because "*to them gave he the power to become the sons of God.*"

But how are sons of God born? That should be a rhetorical question! After all, how did you become the natural child of your natural father? Only your biological father made you be born his biological child. The only way we can be a spiritual son of God is to be born spiritually of God our Father—

He declares three ways we are not born of God.

"*Which were born, not of blood.*" Sinners do not become sons of God because their parents are sons of God. God does not make our children be born of him simply because you and I are believers. Abraham was a son born of God. He was the father of two sons—Isaac and Ishmael. But Ishmael was not born-again of God merely because God had made Abraham be born of God. Isaac was a son of God. From Isaac twins were conceived in the same womb. But God did not make Esau be born of God merely because his father Jacob was born of God. Sinners are not born of God simply because they have a parent that is a son of God. Sons of God are born not of blood.

"*Nor of the will of the flesh.*" Sinners do not become sons of God because it is the will of those around you. It is every believing parents will that their child be born of God. But none can put spiritual, incorruptible Seed—the Living Word—within his child and give them spiritual life. It is the will of this congregation that every spiritually dead child here be born of God. We can pray. But we have to say, "Not our will, God, but thine be done!" Sinners are not born of God by the will of the flesh.

"*Nor of the will of man.*" A sinner cannot even make himself be born of God by his own will. Truth is, until we are born OF GOD, no sinner has a will to be born OF GOD. The sinner's will is to boast that he gave himself life so he can glory that he did it rather than give that glory to God!

Then John declares how we are born?—"But of God." Think of the redundancy of this statement. This is how depraved we are! We will not and cannot bow to this truth. In order to be a son OF GOD we must be born OF GOD. God purposed it from eternity. God elected

who he would save by his free grace. Christ redeemed each of his elect from the curse of the law by his own blood. At the hour appointed, God sends a man with the gospel of Christ the Light and through the preaching of the gospel, God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. The Living Word, the Life, the Light enters into a dead sinner. Right then a son of God is born. Immediately, we do what living sons of God do, we believe on Christ, crying, Father, Father!

Galatians 4: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7: Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Amen!