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# CHRIST'S TEACHING ON THE NEW BIRTH

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*“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 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? 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. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” – John 3:3-8*

## **Nature of the New Birth**

We find the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ on the blessed subject of the new birth in His instructions to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, who came to Him by night.

We find in these verses of Scripture three things. **First**, THE NEW BIRTH IS A NECESSITY if any man is to enter into, or see, or have a part in, the kingdom of God. Why? because “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1Co 15:50). The king-

dom of God is a spiritual kingdom and we are shut out because we are sinful, fleshly creatures.

**Second,** we find that THE NEW BIRTH IS THE WORK OF GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, Who is sovereign in all His operations. It is His work to give new life to those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Our Lord said in His high priestly prayer of John 17, that the Father had given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. It is by His Holy Spirit that the Lord Jesus quickens, or gives eternal life, in the new birth to those whom the Father has given Him.

**Third,** we find that THE NEW BIRTH AND CONVERSION ARE NOT THE SAME. In the new birth the sinner is passive; in conversion a sinner is active. In my natural conception and birth I lay passive, because conception was not of me. Neither did I add one bit to my growth as I lay in my mother's womb for nine months, for I was supplied everything from her. But as soon as I was born, I began to cry. I was very active because I was alive outside of her womb and still needed all of her attention. I cried because I was alive.

So it was in my spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit. I was passive in my conception as He planted the Word of life in my heart (1Pe 1:23)

and thereby gave unto me a new nature (2Pe 1:4). That, dear friend, I had nothing to do with. But, as soon as I was born again, I began to cry after God in Christ; I began to repent and turn to God from my sins, to believe and trust and search after Christ and His precious salvation and to cry after God's righteousness in Christ. I was very active because of what God had wrought in my heart by the new birth.

You see, dear friend, a man cannot be converted, he cannot be saved, he cannot repent, he cannot believe until he has been quickened—made alive toward God by the Holy Spirit, resurrected from the grave of sin (Eph 2:1), and given a new heart (Eze 36:26) and a new nature in the new birth. Then and only then can he repent with a broken heart over his sin as being against God. Then and only then can he see a beauty and glory in Christ whereby he is willing to leave sin and close in with Christ as his Lord and Savior, His King and Deliverer, in true saving faith. So you see, the new birth and conversion are not the same: in conversion, by the grace of God, the sinner is active as he cries after God in repentance and faith. And this he continues all his days.

#### *What Scripture Says*

Let us now see how the rest of Scripture pictures the nature of the new birth. 2 Corinthians 5:17 declares regeneration or the new

birth to be a new creation wherein old things pass away and all things become new. The new birth then is *a new creation*. Ezekiel 36:26-29 declares the new birth to be the receiving of a new heart. Listen to God's Word:

*"A new heart also will I give you [this is God's work]*

*"and a new spirit will I put within you [this is God's work],*

*"and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh [this is God's work],*

*"and I will give you an heart of flesh [this is God's work],*

*"and I will put my Spirit within you [this is God's work],*

*"and cause you to walk in my statutes [this is God's work],*

*"and then ye shall keep my judgments [this is my work] and do them [this is my work]."*

Why? because God did His work in me as *He always does*. Even the work that I do is the result of His work as Philippians 2:12-13 says: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For *it is God which worketh in you* both to will and to do of his good pleasure." So we see that the new birth is *the giving of a new heart*. And in 2 Peter 1:4, regeneration or the new birth is said to be the receiving of a new nature: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine na-

ture, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Yes, the new birth is *the receiving of the divine nature of God*.

Also, John 1:13 tells us that regeneration, or being born again, is according to the will of God. Listen! “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, BUT OF GOD.” Again, in John 3:5-8 we read that regeneration is performed in us by the Holy Spirit, and 1 Peter 1:23 tells us that the instrument He uses is the Word of God: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth forever.”

So as we put all these verses together, we see that by His supernatural power the Holy Spirit renews our inward man, gives us a new heart and makes us partakers of the divine nature of God, making us suitable for His kingdom which is a spiritual kingdom.

### **How the Holy Spirit Gives the New Birth**

The question is asked, “How does He do this?” Will you listen? It has pleased God to make us in our moral being and character a tripart being: understanding, affection and will. In these three things man must be changed if he is to be a follower of righteousness and of a holy God. In the fall of Adam we all lost our

holiness and righteousness and became dead in trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1-3).

### *Understanding*

In the new birth, the Holy Spirit enlightens our understanding which had become darkened (Eph 4:18). Why? because “the natural man” (the fleshly man) “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1Co 2:14). That’s your heart and mine apart from the grace of God.

Having our understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we now behold ourselves, Christ and the world, yea, and everything else in a very different light than before. According to 2 Corinthians 4:6, He causes the light to shine into the darkness of our understanding, giving “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Then and only then does the sinner cry like Isaiah when he saw the glory of God in His holiness, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips...for mine eyes have seen the King: the LORD of hosts” (Isa 6:5).

It is this way that we behold God in His holiness and fall at His feet crying: “Guilty, guilty, vile and full of sin I am.” Why? because the understanding has been enlightened to see God in His holiness and myself in all



my uncleanness because of sin. As I stand before the thrice-holy God with the light of that throne shining upon His holiness, that same light shows me my sinfulness and far distance from God. But remember, the faculty of our understanding is not taken away in the new birth, but it is now enlightened so it has a new direction toward God, His Christ, holiness and things eternal. Yes, in the light of the throne, I have seen myself and God's holiness.

### *Affections*

In the same way, the Holy Spirit gives power to the affections. You see, the affections of man became prostituted in the fall (Isa 53:2), so he could no longer see a beauty or a glory in the holiness of the holy God, but could only see pleasure in sin in all its forms. But as the Holy Spirit works in the understanding, the affections of sinful men are exercised in a different way. Instead of having them on the things of time and sense, they are now set upon things spiritual and eternal as they see the glory and beauty of God as He is in Christ Jesus. Their affections now go out after the blessed, eternal Son of God. They see in Him, His death, resurrection, and ascension, a beauty, a glory, and a suitableness which was before nothing but foolishness and madness to them, because their eyes were blinded and their affections were prostituted by the god of this world, by Satan himself (2Co 4:4).

## Will

Then with the understanding being enlightened and the affections now going out after Christ, the will, which was in bondage (Rom 7:14, 15), is now freed (Rom 6:18). So instead of following after sin and unrighteousness, we surrender up ourselves altogether to God and His judgments, saying with our hearts, “not my will but Thine be done.” We cry like the stricken Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Act 9:6). Yes, when the understanding is enlightened by the Holy Spirit in the new birth, and the affections see a beauty and a glory in Christ, then the will says yes to Jesus Christ, because the sinner has been made willing in the day of His power (Psa 110:3).

## A New Nature

So to sum up all of this concerning the new birth, it is not the removal of anything from the sinner, because our understanding, our affections and our will are still there. But *it is the communication of something to the sinner*: the new birth is THE IMPARTATION OF THE DIVINE NATURE OF GOD (2Pe 1:4). Oh, praise God for this! He gives us *life* in the Lord Jesus. When I was born the first time, I received from my parents their nature, so when I was born again, by the Spirit I received from God His nature.

Yes, the Spirit of God begets within us *a spiritual nature* when He saves us. Listen! Since this is the work of the Holy Spirit, then it cannot be by baptism, church membership, being religious, doing the best you can, nor by making a decision or a profession. It is *something God does* by His sovereign grace and power in the hearts of poor sinners. In fact, we don't even ask for it; that's right, God does it. Then we begin to ask for it because He has worked it in our hearts.

Dear friend, it is only the blindness of the evolutionist who affirms that one order of creatures can beget another order radically different from themselves. But 1 Corinthians 15:39 tells us, "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds:" So that which is born of a vegetable is vegetable, and that which is born of animal is animal, and these never mix. Likewise, that which is born of sinful man is a fleshly, sinful child, a corrupt child—because man *cannot* bring forth anything but that which is like unto himself: sinful (Psa 51:5). Also Psalm 58:3 reads: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."

Therefore we are brought face to face with the hopelessness of it all: we sinful creatures cannot get into the kingdom of grace apart

from the Holy Spirit's working the new birth in our hearts. You see, there are many duties to be performed and many privileges to be enjoyed by the subjects of God's spiritual kingdom which an unregenerate man can neither perform nor enjoy (1Co 2:14). Can an unregenerate man repent in dust and ashes when he hates God and loves sin? Can an unregenerate man live by faith in and on the Son of God, when he has only eyes to live by sight, and no eyes to see Him? Can an unregenerate man crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts when by nature he runs after sin greedily? The answer is NO! a thousand times no, not until he has a new heart and a new nature which will love these things. So we see then the **NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH** to fit a man for the spiritual realm which is the kingdom of God.

You see, dear friend, heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people, prepared here on earth, made suitable for God, His presence and His holiness. I ask you, Shall he who never sought after nor desired one hour of secret communion with God, delight to have no other employment for all eternity? The answer is *NO!* As the tree falleth, so it lieth (Ecc 11:3). He that is unjust will be unjust still: and he that is filthy will be filthy still (Rev 22:11). If a man has no desire for God and His Christ down here, he will have none in eternity.

## **Consequences of the New Birth**

Now in closing I ask, “what are the consequences of the new birth?” When the new birth is worked in the heart of man, he seeks after the Lord Jesus Christ. The new life in him causes him to find in Christ a suitableness for all his needs as a sinner. He finds at the cross that the Lord Jesus paid his sin-debt in full. He finds in the empty tomb that God has completely justified him from all his sins because of the imputed righteousness of Christ. He finds that having been raised to sit in heavenly places in Christ, he has in Him an imputed holiness because Christ has been made unto him sanctification. And in the Holy Spirit who indwells him, he has an imparted holiness, so he will by the grace of God progress, slowly but surely, in sanctification. He finds in Scripture that he whom God justifies, He also sanctifies, having given His newborn child a disposition to love righteousness and hate sin. As 1 John 3:9 says, no one born of God deliberately, knowingly, or habitually practices sin, for God’s nature abides in him. His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him and he cannot practice sinning because he is born of God.

A man who has been born again of the Spirit of God will repent and turn to God from all his sins. He will mourn over them, flee

them, hate them, desire to be free from them and seek the face of God in Christ, so his sins may be put beneath His precious blood. It will be said of him as it was of the Corinthians, "That ye sorrowed to repentance...for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of...for behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" (2Co 7:9-11). Yes, there will be a desire to be through with sin, and this attitude of hatred for sin will be with him all the days of his life.





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