

Just What Do You Mean BORN AGAIN?

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WHY Jewish Rulers Hated Message

[Editor's note: In John's Gospel, chapter 3, we read of how Nicodemus came to Jesus privately to enquire further about the things – miracles – that He had been doing. Jesus proceeded to instruct Nicodemus about the Kingdom and Government of God – and how it is not possible to see or become a part of it unless one is "born again."]

The Jewish rulers of Jesus' day also thought He was proclaiming a government to be set up immediately – to overthrow the Roman Empire, then ruling Judea as a vassal state.

One of these rulers of the Jews was a man named Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee, and the Pharisees were hostile to Jesus, because of this new Gospel. Nicodemus, however, wanted to meet this astonishing Messenger and discuss it with him. To avoid criticism from his colleagues, he came to Jesus by night.

"We know," he said, "that you are a teacher come from God."

The "we" implies that the divine identity of the Messenger and the source of His message was known to the Pharisees.

Judea was a vassal state, under the rule of the Romans. The Romans were shrewd enough to force leaders among the Jews to administer most of the details of government, under higher Roman officials. Of course, the Roman rule was protected by occupying military forces. This system made life for the Jewish sub-rulers very desirable – a status worth maintaining.

At once Jesus perceived the import of Nicodemus' first words. His Message was the good news of the coming WORLD GOVERNMENT OF GOD – that is, the KINGDOM OF GOD – the GOVERNMENT of God.

These Jewish rulers feared that Message. Jesus was of their race – a Jew. If they did not oppose Him, they feared being shorn of their power, and perhaps [be] put to death as subversives threatening the overthrow of the Roman Government. And the Pharisees thought Jesus proclaimed the *immediate* take-over of that rule!

Not of This Age

Therefore, Jesus did not waste words. He struck straight through to the crux point – the Kingdom of God is *not of this* world – this time – this age – but of the WORLD TOMORROW – a different and following AGE. Not composed of humans, but of immortals – the GOD FAMILY!

So Jesus said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Notice carefully, please – being “born again” has a vital connection with the Kingdom of God – with THE FACT that it is not of this time – this age. And – I repeat – Jesus’ Gospel – His message – *was* the Kingdom of God.

But Jesus’ abrupt opening statement left Nicodemus confused. The religious leaders, and the hundreds of denominations and sects professing Christianity today are confused and deceived! Today’s religionists put a different twist on it than did Nicodemus, however.

Nicodemus *did* understand clearly what is meant by being *born*. He knew it meant being delivered from his mother’s womb. It meant being delivered into the WORLD! Today’s religious leaders read into it a different meaning! What Nicodemus could not understand was *how* – in what manner – anyone could be born AGAIN! And of course, being carnal-minded, he could only conceive of a second *physical* birth. But he knew what being *born* meant!

Born Human a Second Time?

Puzzled, he asked: “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” He was not confused about what it meant by being BORN. What Nicodemus could not understand was a second birth. He thought Jesus was talking about a second *human* birth.

He was unable to conceive of any but a second *physical* birth – his mind could not *grasp* spiritual things.

Now Jesus had made clear that the Kingdom of God is something that can be seen – but not until or UNLESS one is “born again.” Not during this *physical lifetime!* Also, verse 5, the Kingdom of God is something a man may *enter into* – but not until after he is born AGAIN – another and entirely different birth.

Then Jesus came quickly to the point – that the Kingdom of God is not of this present human LIFE in this present WORLD – it is not of this TIME – this present life-TIME – or age – it is the succeeding age – and the life to come.

Here is the crux point that explains it all: Jesus said:

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit IS *spirit*.”

Man is now flesh – human. He is MATERIAL SUBSTANCE. “Dust thou art,” said God to Adam, “and unto dust thou shalt return.” Again, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 3:19 and 2:7).

Those Born Again To BE Spirit

But said Jesus plainly, when one is born of the Spirit HE WILL BE SPIRIT! Look at it! Read it in your own Bible.

The Kingdom of God will be composed of SPIRIT BEINGS – not of humans!

At birth of human flesh, one is delivered from his mother's womb into this world. When born of the Spirit one will be delivered from the CHURCH of God (physical) into the KINGDOM of God (a Kingdom of SPIRIT BEINGS!).

Man is now COMPOSED of flesh – material substance – matter.

When BORN AGAIN he will *BE* spirit – a SPIRIT BEING, no longer human. He will be COMPOSED of spirit – of spirit composition – with life inherent – with self-containing life – not then existing by the breath of air and the circulation of blood.

Of the next age when the Kingdom of God will rule the world – the next LIFE – Jesus said, “they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God...” (Matt. 22:30).

Marriage is a physical, fleshly union. In the age of God's Kingdom – when “born again” – we shall BE spirit, not flesh. Born of God as SPIRIT BEINGS, no longer human. Angels are spirits – composed of spirit (Heb. 1:7). Jesus did not say we shall then *be* angels – but AS the angels – sexless and composed of SPIRIT. Angels are spirit beings – created as such – but not begotten and BORN of God as God's own born children. We therefore shall be much higher than angels!

Jesus explained this further to Nicodemus:

“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 everyone that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

You cannot see wind. Wind is compared to spirit. It is INVISIBLE. That's why mortal FLESH, as we now are, cannot SEE the Kingdom of God. Those who inherit it will *be* spirit – normally invisible to eyes still human.

Energy of an A-Bomb?

Jesus was comparing also the POWER of one *born* of the Spirit to that of wind. A scientist of the U.S. Weather Bureau, Dr. J. Murray Mitchell, Jr., Research Climatologist, said that the energy of one average hurricane is much greater than an A-bomb such as destroyed Hiroshima. I am quite certain that no human claiming to have been “born again” in his human life is capable of exerting a tiny fraction of that kind of energy. But – as I shall show in this article, when one *becomes* spirit he will have that kind of POWER!

Not While Flesh and Blood

The apostle Paul made clear that the Kingdom of God is something a human may INHERIT, but not in THIS AGE – not while he is composed of material flesh. He may, now, become only an HEIR, not YET an inheritor!

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:50).

Leading up to this verse, Paul had made it very clear.

“The first man is of the earth, earthy [human]: the second man is the Lord from heaven [a divine GOD Being]” (1 Cor. 15:47).

This is what Jesus was saying to Nicodemus. He was of the earth, earthy – human – he was flesh, not spirit. He was born of the flesh, so that’s what he was – FLESH. When one is born of the Spirit, he will BE SPIRIT.

BUT WE CANNOT BE spirit in this present age.

THERE IS A TIME ELEMENT CONCERNED WITH BEING BORN AGAIN!

Continue, now, in 1 Corinthians 15:

“As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy” (verse 48). That is precisely what Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus. He was born of the flesh – he WAS flesh. He was born of the earth – he *was* earthy. And so are we all! And, same verse, “...and as is the heavenly, such are they also that *are* heavenly.” But for us humans, WHEN? Not in this life!

Next verse: “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall [future – resurrection] also bear the image of the heavenly” (verse 49). As we are now flesh, we shall be SPIRIT – at the resurrection. That is when we shall be “BORN AGAIN” – when we shall *see*, enter into, the Kingdom of God – when we *are* spirit – at the resurrection!

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [be dead], but we shall all be *changed*, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [the then living] shall be *changed*” (verses 50-52).

There is the TIME *when* we may be born again – *when* we may *see*, *enter into*, *inherit* the Kingdom – when “BORN AGAIN” – and NOT BEFORE!

How CHANGED When Born Again

How shall we be changed? The next words answer!

“For this corruptible [flesh, as we now are] must put on incorruption [spirit – that which is born of God *is* spirit] and this mortal must put on immortality.” Be changed from material flesh to spirit!

Until born again, we cannot *see* the Kingdom of God – (Jesus to Nicodemus, John 3:3).

Until born again, we cannot *enter into* the Kingdom of God – (Jesus to Nicodemus, John 3:5)

Until no longer flesh, but *changed* into SPIRIT, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God – (Jesus to Nicodemus, John 3:6-8).

While still flesh and blood (as Nicodemus was and we are) we cannot *inherit* the Kingdom of God – (Paul to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 15:50).

Until the resurrection, at Christ’s coming, we shall not be changed from corruptible flesh into incorruptible SPIRIT (Paul – 1 Cor. 15:50-53 and verses 22-23).

Until the resurrection, therefore, we cannot *see, enter* into, or *inherit* the Kingdom of God. WE CANNOT BE BORN AGAIN UNTIL THE RESURRECTION!

Now Heirs – Not Yet Inheritors

While in our present status, born of the flesh and composed of flesh, we cannot see, enter into, or inherit the Kingdom of God. Notice, now, the status of the truly converted Christians, in this life – this world:

“Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8:9). Unless one has received the Holy Spirit, and this Spirit is dwelling in him, he is not a Christian. Joining a church does not make one a Christian. Receiving and following God’s Spirit does!

Holy Spirit Entering Compares to Sperm Entering Ovum

But now see how God’s Spirit entering and dwelling in one compares to the physical sperm impregnating the ovum – the imparting of eternal SPIRIT life, later to produce – to bring forth – a SPIRIT PERSON! A fertilized ovum – an embryo – is NOT a *born* human person. Life from the father has been imparted to it – he has begotten it – but neither embryo nor fetus is YET a *born* person. In the same manner the Spirit-begotten human is not, *yet*, a SPIRIT PERSON OR BEING, as Jesus said he shall be *when* born again!

Continue: “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (verse 11).

UNDERSTAND THIS! There is a direct comparison between having been born of the flesh and being born AGAIN of God. Jesus said that which is born of the flesh *is* flesh – a born *human*. That which is born of the Spirit (God) is spirit – a born SPIRIT PERSON!

A mortal human life *starts* when a sperm cell from the body of the father impregnates – imparts physical LIFE to – an ovum (egg cell) in the mother. At this point the father begets, sires. He does not “bring forth”: the mother does that, later. His part in the PROCESS leading to final birth is then *done*. BUT THERE IS A TIME ELEMENT. At the TIME of begettal, birth (parturition) has not YET occurred.

It is necessary to make this explanation, at this point, because the popular deception of a deceived traditional “Christianity” is to claim that when one “receives Christ” – “accepts Christ”

– professes Christ” – or first receives God’s Holy Spirit to dwell in him, that he is already “BORN AGAIN.”

First, then, notice the physical type and comparison.

The TIME Element

In human physical reproduction, there is a TIME ELEMENT. From impregnation – *begettal* on the part of the father – having *conceived* on the part of the mother – to BIRTH, or *parturition*, or being delivered from the mother’s womb is a TIME ELEMENT of nine months.

That nine-month period is called *gestation*. Upon conception, the now fertilized *ovum* is called an *embryo*. A few months later, it is called a fetus. But *during* this nine-month period of *gestation*, we do not speak of the embryo-fetus as having been *born*. It is in the PROCESS toward birth. It is the child of its parents. But it is then the *unborn* child of its parents. The father has already begotten it – sired it. But the mother has not yet given *birth* to it. Yet it is, during the gestation period, the *unborn* child of its parents.

Now in being “born again,” the PROCESS of this birth begins when GOD’S divine SPIRIT-LIFE is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, from His very PERSON, entering to dwell within us. Repeat, from Romans 8:

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [change to immortal spirit] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (verse 11). This is describing the same thing explained in 1 Corinthians 15:50-53, the resurrection.

Millions of sincere professing Christians believe that when they profess Christ (or receive His Holy Spirit) they are “born again.” What actually happens is this:

The Church Our Mother

When one, after repentance, faith and baptism receives the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God puts him into – baptizes him into – God’s Church. The Church is called the Body of Christ. So we read: “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13).

Again, the Church is called “Jerusalem above,” or “the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22-23). Now notice, in Galatians 4:26: “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”

The analogy is this: When begotten by God the Father by receiving His Holy Spirit, we are put into the Church, which during this gestation period is OUR MOTHER.

The human mother of the fetus within her womb serves the function of feeding her unborn child with physical food, so that it may develop and grow physically. And also, she carries it where she may best protect it from physical injury or harm, until parturition – delivery from her womb.

The spiritual mother – the church – is commissioned to “feed the flock” (1 Pet. 5:2) through the ministry which God has set in the Church “for the perfecting of the saints... for the edifying of

the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man..." (Eph. 4:11-13). Just as the human fetus develops and grows physically during the PRE-birth gestation period, so WE, after begetting by God's Spirit, develop and grow SPIRITUALLY in PRE-birth state.

But not only is the Church to feed the members on the Word of God – spiritual food – but also to protect these conceived but yet unborn children of God from spiritual harm, as the very next verse shows: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive..." (Eph.4:14).

Then, at the time of the resurrection, we in the Church – the spiritual Mother – shall be DELIVERED from her and born into – brought forth into – the Kingdom – the spirit-composed FAMILY of God.

Sons of God NOW

Now, further: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). The unborn child in his mother's womb is the child of his father and mother, though not yet born – delivered from the womb. So are we, if God's Spirit dwells in us – if we are being led by God's Spirit – children of God. Yet, at *this time*, we are in the *gestation* state, not yet the *parturition*. And only HEIRS. Not inheritors!

Continue: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be [future – at resurrection] also glorified together" (verse 17).

Now see how this passage designates the resurrection into GLORY – when we shall be spirit – as a BIRTH!

"For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" – that is *the time* of Christ's coming to REIGN, and of the resurrection to (being *born* of) SPIRIT composition – "...because the creation [RSV] itself also shall be delivered [a *birth*] from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and *travaileth in pain* together until now" (verses 19-22).

Here is another comparison: we shall be delivered from *this world* (the Church is *in*, though not *of* this world) into a glorious WORLD TOMORROW and the Kingdom which shall rule it.

The CREATION is waiting for this time of Christ's coming, the resurrection, and the Kingdom of God. Because the creation *shall be DELIVERED* from the bondage of corruption. Not now delivered – SHALL BE – at the resurrection time! Although this is not referring directly to *our* being born again, it IS a direct comparison to the BIRTH of a child being DELIVERED from its mother's womb.

The resurrection – the time when we are changed to BE spirit and to INHERIT the Kingdom – will be a time of DELIVERY FROM the bondage of corruptible flesh and from this world of SIN – A REAL BIRTH!

Christ Born a Second Time by the Resurrection

Continue in Romans 8:

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [Jesus] might be the *firstborn* among many brethren” (verse 29).

Now compare with Romans 1:3-4: “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God... by the resurrection from the dead.”

Jesus was, in the human flesh – His first birth – a descendant of David, and, by the resurrection from the dead – (born AGAIN) – the Son of God, now no longer human, but composed of SPIRIT – a Spirit Being. He thus became the FIRST SO BORN of many brethren who *shall be* BORN AGAIN at the time of the resurrection of those who are Christ’s.

Of course we understand, and so did Paul in writing the above, that Jesus was also the Son of God while in the human flesh. Though *born of a human* woman, He was sired by God. But this is comparing the two births – the one from the human Mary, as descended from the human David – the other, by His resurrection to glory, as Son of God by His resurrection, in the same manner we may be.

Emphatically this does NOT imply that Jesus was a sinner needing salvation. He was the pioneer, setting us the example, that we, too, may be BORN of God.

When Born Again What Shall We Be Like?

When we are born again, what shall we be like?

Here is the answer: “For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; *from whence* also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall *change* our vile body [FLESH], that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body...” (Phil. 3:20-21). And what is Christ’s GLORIOUS body like? His eyes are as flames of fire – His face bright as the sun at full strength – Revelation 1:14-16.

A TIME When Begotten But Not YET Born

Thus, scripture after scripture – analogy after analogy – comparison after comparison – shows that being BORN of God is a PROCESS in which there is a time element. Just as being born of the human flesh is a *process*.

At the *time* when the father *begets*, and the mother *conceives* – of the union of sperm cell and ovum – the fertilized ovum becomes an *embryo*. But it is not yet delivered from the womb – not yet *born!* And will not be for nine months. A pregnancy is in *progress*. Yet during this period of physical development and growth, it is the unborn child of its parents.

In like manner, at the *time* when the Spirit Father, God, begets a human with the Spirit (the spiritual counterpart of the physical *sperm*) – the Holy Spirit – he becomes a *son* of God! He is then already a *son* of God.

But he is still human – he is still material flesh and blood. He must now undergo a period (until death, the resurrection) of spiritual development and growth. He is in the *gestation* state in the PROCESS toward being born. He is in the CHURCH of God, but the Church is not the KINGDOM of God.

The Church is composed of *human, flesh-and-blood* children of God. And, flesh and blood cannot see, cannot enter into, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is made up of spirit-composed children of God. The Spirit-begotten human in the Church is in the *process* of being born of God, BUT he has not yet entered the Kingdom of God. He has not yet been BORN of God.

He is in the *gestation* state toward spirit-BIRTH, but not yet BORN of the Spirit. He yet has a lot of spiritual developing and growing to do – acquiring the spiritual *character*-image of God.

POWER Greater Than Energy of Wind

There is another passage, understood by almost none, that reveals our astonishing *transcendent* potential!

It begins in Hebrews 2, verse 6. But first, notice about Christ, in chapter 1:

“God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of *all things* [Moffatt and others, *the universe*], by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, stamped with God’s own character [Moffatt] and upholding [sustaining] the universe by the word of his power...” (Heb. 1:1-3). ALL POWER in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18) has been given to Christ. He is now Chief Executive of God’s Government of the UNIVERSE.

Now begin with Hebrews 2:6; a citation from Psalms 8:4-6:

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him?”

Yes, why should the Great God be concerned about us mortals? WHY did He put us here on earth? What is the PURPOSE of life – what is our transcendent potential? It is so far above and beyond anything you have thought or imagined, it seems shockingly incredible!

Can you believe it? Are you willing to believe what is now plainly stated? Here comes the astonishing answer, beginning verse 7:

“Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.” Some translations have it, “for a little while lower than the angels.” Continue: “Thou crownedst him [kingship] with GLORY and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands...” – that is, God’s creation. Continue:

NOT YET the Universe!

“Thou hast put ALL THINGS [Moffatt: the UNIVERSE] in subjection under his feet. For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, he *left nothing* that is not put under him...” Can you grasp that? The entire vast, endless UNIVERSE! But that is for BORN sons of God. Man is not yet BORN – except Christ only! Continue. Here comes the answer:

“... But *now* [in this present gestation state] we see NOT YET all things [the universe] put under him” (verse 8).

But what *do* we see, NOW?

“But we see JESUS ...crowned with glory and honour” (verse 9). Yes, as revealed in chapter 1, Jesus has already been given the executive administration of God’s Government – the KINGDOM OF GOD – over the entire UNIVERSE! Only, *until* our time to inherit and possess the government of EARTH, at Christ’s return. [For now] He is allowing Satan to continue on this earth his work of deception. Now continue:

“For it became him [Jesus], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto GLORY, to make the captain [margin, leader – or forerunner, pioneer – the One who has gone on before us, as we are to follow] of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them *brethren*” (verses 10-11).

Christ First Born of Many

We are, as quoted before, heirs of God, and joint-heirs – as BRETHERN – with Christ. He has gone on ahead, through a resurrection, to GLORY as the pioneer!

He is the firstborn of many brethren! He has INHERITED “all things” – the UNIVERSE! We are still heirs – still in the gestation stage of the process of being BORN of God. Jesus is now our High Priest, supervising our spiritual development – preparing us to be kings and priests, reigning *with* Him!

The first thousand years we shall reign ON THE EARTH. For He shall have “made them kings and priests: and they shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:10, RSV).

The First Thousand Years

For that first thousand years, Jesus is to reign on the throne of His earthly ancestor DAVID in Jerusalem (Isa. 9:6-7). And “he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron...” (Rev. 2:26-27). But how and from where shall we rule?

Jesus said, again, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne [at Jerusalem], even as I also overcame, and am [now] set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21).

When BORN of God, we shall BE spirit, no longer human flesh and blood. We shall be given POWER! As Daniel [and Christ] reveal, the saints then shall take the kingdoms of earth’s nations and RULE them – for the first thousand years [Dan. 2:44; 7:27; Rev. 20:4, 6].

And... *after that*? The passage in Hebrews 2 shows that then, under Christ, we shall be given power to rule over the entire vast universe – literally ALL THINGS. For that is the power that has been given to Christ, and we are joint-heirs, to become joint-INHERITORS with Him.

All Power – The UNIVERSE

Most people have passed right over many vital statements in the Bible, not recognizing their tremendous import!

Let me give you a few. Ask yourself, have you ever recognized the true import of these statements in God's Word?

Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came and spoke unto them [after His resurrection], saying, ALL POWER is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

Matthew 11:27: Jesus said: “ALL THINGS [the whole universe] are delivered unto me of my Father...”

John 3:35: “The Father loveth the Son and hath given ALL THINGS into his hand.”

John 13:3: During the last Passover, “Jesus knowing that the Father had given ALL THINGS into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God...”

John 16:15: “ALL THINGS that the Father hath are mine...”

1 Corinthians 15:27: “For he [the Father] hath put ALL THINGS under his [Christ's] feet. But when he saith ALL THINGS are put under him, it is manifest that he [the Father] is excepted, which did put ALL THINGS under him. And when ALL THINGS shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put ALL THINGS under him, that God may be all in all.”

And – incredible, yet true! – we, in Christ, are made co-heirs with Christ in this ultimate supreme rule.

Incidentally, 1 Corinthians 15:27-28, along with verses 22-26, indicates that our reign over the universe shall follow the thousand years' reign on the earth.

Must GROW During Gestation

Human life *starts* with what the Bible terms “corruptible seed” – physical male sperm. Divine life *starts* with that which is incorruptible – the Holy Spirit of God entering the human person. But as the human embryo must GROW till it becomes a fetus, which must GROW to the point of being born into the human family, *so* the Christian in whom divine life has been started by the gift of God's *incorruptible* Spirit must GROW towards perfection to be born into the GOD family. He will *then* be perfect, unable to sin.

Peter gives an analogy of this:

“Being born again...” (1 Pet. 1:23). *Being* – in process of – not having *been* – not yet an immortal person – but *being* “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible...” (Other translations use the term “begotten.”) *Greek: annagennao* – to beget anew – (Young). Peter is here referring to the process having *started* within us by the incorruptible Spirit of God – *not* as our human life was begotten by human physical sperm. Peter here shows that the Spirit of God

is the incorruptible “seed” that imparted the presence of eternal life within us. Continue: “...By the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”

Peter continues, chapter 2:

“Wherefore... as newborn babes...” Not that we *are* already born *perfect* divine spirit persons having entered into and inherited God’s Kingdom. He is comparing the Christian’s spiritual “gestation” period to the growth of a newborn human physical baby simply because it would be awkward indeed to compare it to a physical embryo or fetus. He is not saying we *are* already *born* babes in God’s Kingdom – but *as* – or *like* newborn human babes. It is an *analogy*, which Webster says is a comparison or “likeness between two things... consisting in the resemblance *not of the things themselves*, but of two or more attributes, circumstances, or effects.”

Peter is simply showing that, *as* a newborn human babe must be nourished and GROW physically (even, for that matter, as must the unborn fetus), so Christians must grow spiritually. Continue: “...Desire the sincere milk of the word” (RSV has: “long for the pure spiritual milk”) “that ye may GROW thereby” (1 Pet. 2:1-2). Paul styled it “unto the *perfect* man” (Eph. 4:13) – unable to sin. When born again, we shall not be helpless spirit BABES, but spirit beings of perfection *unable* to sin. This Christian spiritual GROWTH is in spiritual character and knowledge in this present human life. As a physical babe must grow *physically*, *so* we in the Christian life must grow in spiritual knowledge and character (see 2 Pet. 3:18) to become PERFECT, which we shall never attain UNTIL born as spirit *beings*.

The Comparison

During our converted human Christian life, we are already children of God, as yet unborn. We have within us, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the presence of ETERNAL LIFE – Spirit life – divine life – BUT, only from and through GOD. We do not, yet, have any eternal life *inherent* – of *ourselves*, independent of God! And WE COULD LOSE IT – be aborted!

This compares to the unborn physical fetus in the gestation period. It has human life – but only through the umbilical cord and FROM the mother – NOT independently of itself. And it can be aborted!

This is so clearly brought out in the Bible, in 1 John 5:11-12: “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, *and this life is in his Son.*” It is not inherent in us. We do not now in this life have born life of our own, independent of Him. Our contact with Him through His Spirit is the umbilical cord through which we are partaking of eternal *life from Him*. Continue, verse 12: “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life.” If one is *cut off* from Christ, he has NO eternal life.

A BORN human baby has human life *on its own* – independent of its mother. That defines the difference between the state of begetting and a born state! The only difference is, in the Christian life we are fed and protected by and through the spiritual Mother – the Church – while our actual

eternal life comes into us through and from GOD. But when BORN again, of GOD, we shall have ETERNAL LIFE INHERENT – of our own! We are NOT now in that state!

HOW Jesus Was the ONLY Begotten Son

King David of Israel had God's Holy Spirit. Praying for forgiveness, following his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, he implored: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; **and take not thy Holy Spirit from me**" (Psalm 51:10-11).

The prophets had received God's Holy Spirit. Peter wrote: "... Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). They could not be called "holy men" unless God's Spirit was within them. [1 Peter 1:10-11 reveals "the Spirit of Christ *in* them" – English Standard Version].

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are to be seen in the Kingdom of God. Jesus said so [Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28]. Therefore God's Spirit was "dwelling in them" – they were begotten of God – but THEY WERE NOT *BORN* OF GOD – for Jesus is the *firstborn* of many brethren.

But if *they* were *begotten* of God by the Holy Spirit – and hundreds of years before Christ was born, how could Jesus be called "the ONLY begotten Son of God"?

Answer: The scriptures calling Jesus the ONLY begotten Son of God all apply to His begetting as the human Son, His *first* birth – born of the human mother, Mary. Jesus was the ONLY *human* ever begotten by God prior to HUMAN birth. In Revelation 1:5, the A.V. speaks of Christ as the *first begotten* – but other translations render it, properly, first-BORN – referring to His resurrection, not His human birth from His mother Mary.

Jesus was NOT the *first* begotten *in the sense* that Abraham, David, and Old Testament prophets were begotten.

Before Jesus was conceived by Mary, He was not the SON of God. God is the divine FAMILY. He was one of that Family. In John 1:1, He is called the "Logos" – the Word. He, like the Father, had existed eternally. But He is nowhere in God's Word referred to as a SON of God prior to conception by Mary. His *human* birth was His *first* birth. He gave up the GLORY He had with the Father in order to be born into the world to save the world.

Abraham and many others – prophets and writers of the Bible – were begotten of God – they were in the same identical state as human Christians who have God's Spirit within them today. But they have not, even yet, INHERITED – *entered into* – the Kingdom of God. They have not yet been BORN of God.

Jesus had to be the FIRST to be BORN of God – the FIRSTBORN of many brethren. That was His *second* birth, as the resurrection will be ours! "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise [were not born into the KINGDOM]: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39-40).

This, again, PROVES that the conversion in this life – receiving the Holy Spirit – is only a *begettal* – NOT a birth! For Old Testament fathers and prophets *received* God’s Spirit – but they were not “born again” because Jesus was the *first* so born!

How does this PROCESS of being born again take place?

What is the WAY?

Peter gave the WAY, and the conditions. Repent, he said, and be baptized, as an act of FAITH in Christ, His shed blood in payment of the penalty of our sins, and His resurrection making possible our eternal life and being born again. Then, he said, we shall receive the Holy Spirit. Those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells ARE CHRIST’S (Rom. 8:9); all others are not. But IF God’s Spirit dwells in them, God will, by a resurrection AS He raised Christ from the dead, bring forth all such in immortal spirit life – composed of spirit as Christ is.

ALL these scriptures MAKE CLEARLY PLAIN that we are to be BORN AGAIN by, and ONLY by, a resurrection to spirit composition.

We are now heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ – NOT YET INHERITORS, or possessors of the Kingdom.

The Human Birth

What is a birth – what is meant by being born?

The actual final *birth* is called *parturition* – a baby being delivered out of its mother’s womb.

But this *birth* requires a father, as well as a mother! If it were not for the PART [that] the father contributes in the process, there would be no fetus to be *born*. But THERE IS A TIME ELEMENT. The father’s part in what shall, later, be the *birth* is to beget – to gender – to sire. From his body emanates the sperm cell that unites with and *starts* life in an ovum within the mother. This occurs nine months *prior* to *parturition* – or birth.

We *never* say, in the English language, that immediately after an embryo is conceived in the mother – sired or begotten by the father – that the embryo has already been BORN! Birth has not occurred! To say it would sound idiotic, ridiculous!

From conception [what] must follow [is] the PROCESS called *gestation* for nine months. The embryo takes on human form and is called a fetus. It must develop and grow physically to be born.

So with being born again, in a spiritual birth.

What comes from the divine Father is the Holy Spirit. Just as the unborn child in the mother’s womb is, even in the fetal state, the child (yet unborn) of its parents, so those in whom God’s Spirit dwells are, already, children of God. But they are still *OF* this *first* birth – still human – still composed of physical flesh. They are still in their spiritual Mother – the Church – which is still in this corruptible present world, though not *of* it. When born of the Spirit, said Jesus, they shall BE spirit.

But IF God's Holy Spirit dwells in them, God *then* will resurrect them (if they are dead) or *change* them (if still living) from physical to spirit composition at Christ's coming. They will then be *brought forth* – *delivered* from their Mother, the Church of God, into the Kingdom of God.

Of the *first birth*, we are, and remain, FLESH! HUMAN Beings!

Glorious World Tomorrow

What WONDERFUL, almost INCOMPREHENSIBLE, GLORIOUS GOOD NEWS!

And the BEST NEWS is, that the COMING OF CHRIST is now drawing VERY NEAR! And then – the PEACEFUL, HAPPY, GLORIOUS WORLD TOMORROW!

All who NOW are *begotten* sons of God shall then be BORN – elevated from mortal to IMMORTAL, from decaying FLESH to SPIRIT – from HUMAN to DIVINE!

And that true born-again experience will be incomparably more GLORIOUS than the false, vague, meaningless, so-called “born-again experience” that deceived THOUSANDS think they have had now.

Can your mind grasp what an incredible, transcendent GLORY is the true potential of those who do BELIEVE, REPENT and OBEY?

But, the scriptures that break before our eyes this GLORIOUS GOOD NEWS, also warn us to TAKE HEED, and to make our calling and election sure [2 Pet. 1:10]!