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Publications

**Born
of
God**

by Leroy Surface

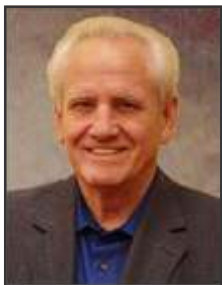
“Born of God”

“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ”

John 3:7

Almost fifty years ago, something happened that basically destroyed the understanding of millions of people in America as to what it means to be “born again.” When Jimmy Carter ran for president in 1976, he ran as a “born again Christian.” Immediately, the advertizing industry “borrowed” the term, and gave it a secular meaning. We who are old enough to remember the four years of president Carter’s administration, certainly recall that the entire nation was inundated with advertisements of everything from “*born again soap powders*,” to “*born again cars*.” Any product that was “changed” was said to be “born again.” Even the editor of Hustler Magazine claimed to get “born again,” and was baptized by one of the most famous preachers of that generation. His “baptism” made the national news, and when he announced the “Born Again” issue of “Hustler,” many Christians bought the magazine before they knew it was a hoax; it was the same old “pornography” under a new name.

During the almost fifty years since that time, the term “born again” has lost all meaning to most “Christians.” Amazingly, they believe a person can be “born again” and still be a sinner, which totally contradicts the word of God. In this message, we will go scripture by scripture through the word of God on this subject. We will see what Jesus said about the necessity of being “born



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again.” We will search the writings of Paul, John, and Peter to see what they knew about the “new birth,” which John called “Born of God.” We will see what the prophets of the Old Testament said when they foretold “*the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow*” 1 Peter 1:10-11. Please study this message closely, along with your KJV bible.

Born of God

Message by: Leroy Surface

I heard a famous pastor lead the people in a sinner's prayer; *"Jesus, I repent of my sin. I ask you to come into my heart. I make you my Lord and savior. Amen."* After saying these words, the pastor said to his vast television audience, *"If you prayed this prayer, we believe you are born again."*

What does it mean to be "born again?" Is it really as simple as repeating words given to us by a preacher? What do the scriptures tell us? Jesus was the first to speak of the necessity of being *"born again,"* but it is the apostle John who goes into great detail as to what it means to be "born of God." The modern church has been filled with sinners who believe they are saved, simply because they followed the instructions of a preacher who did not even know for themselves the *"truth,"* of which Jesus said, *"ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* John 8:32.

Salvation is *"by grace, through faith..."* Ephesians 2:8. The *"faith that saves,"* however, is not simply *"believing you are saved;"* instead, it is to *"believe the record that God gave of His Son"* I John 5:10. Know who Christ is; know what He came into the world to do; know that he accomplished his eternal purpose when He died on the cross. Those who do not know the truth will tell you many things about why Jesus died on the cross; *"...to take our penalty...to pay our debt...to suffer our punishment...."* The record God gave is very different, and that is what we must believe in order to be *"born of God."*

Nicodemus

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3:7

Nicodemus was a very prominent man in Israel in the days of Jesus' ministry. He was *"a ruler of the Jews"* John 3:1, a *"master of Israel"* John 3:10, and a member of the high Sanhedrin Court. He came to Jesus by night, lest his associates should see him with the lowly Nazarene.

He gives honor to Jesus by calling Him “*Rabbi*,” and seems to represent the viewpoint of some others when he says, “...*we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him*” John 3:2. Rather than being flattered by the honor given Him by such an important man of Israel, Jesus answered with what must have seemed an incredible statement to Nicodemus; “*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”

John 3:3

For almost five hundred years the Jews had been expecting the appearing of one called “*The Messiah the Prince*” Daniel 9:25, who according to the teaching of their Rabbis, would “*restore the kingdom to Israel*” Acts 1:6. Several months earlier Jesus had come into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, “*The time is fulfilled (the Messiah the Prince has come), and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel*” Mark 1:15.

Nicodemus, being a teacher of the Jews, had most certainly taught them about the coming Messiah and the glorious kingdom he would establish in Israel. He was seen by the people as an authority on the kingdom of God, so it must have been disturbing to hear from Jesus the necessity of being “*born again*” before he could “*see the kingdom of God.*” This was hard for Nicodemus to comprehend. “*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 asked Jesus. John 3:4. The door was opened for Jesus to reveal even more about “*born again*” to Nicodemus. Jesus replied, “*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*” John 3:5.

This was an amazing concept, one this great teacher of the law, Nicodemus, had never heard or considered; in order to “*enter into the kingdom of God*” a person had to be born two times. “*Born of water*” was the first birth, from the mother's womb. The second birth is “*born of the Spirit.*” Jesus concluded this part of the discussion, saying, “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*” John 3:6. Nicodemus was left to ponder these things after his brief encounter with Jesus of Nazareth, asking, “*How can these things be?*” John 2:9. The answer Jesus gave

to this question in this same discourse, is one which very few have ever found. The purpose of this message is to tell the “how” and “what” of being “*born again of the Spirit of God.*”

A Living Soul

A very common belief in the modern church is that every person, whether saved or lost, “...is a spirit, has a soul, and lives in a body.” According to this doctrine, the “soul” of man is nothing more than his “mind,” that is, the source of what he thinks and how he reasons. There is nothing in the scriptures that says this, however. In fact, the scriptural record says of the first man, Adam, “*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*” Genesis 2:7.

Adam was not “a spirit, who had a soul, and lived in a body,” but he was a “soul,” a “*living soul.*” The “*breath of life*” which God breathed into Adam was not just air; it was the “breath of God,” which gave Adam the “*image and likeness of God,*” and made him to be a “*living soul.*” Fallen man does not have the image and likeness of God, nor does he “*breathe the breath of God.*” This was the “*death*” Adam died in the same day he disobeyed God and gave sin an entrance into God’s creation.

The apostle Paul spoke of these things to the Corinthians; “*And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam (Jesus Christ) was made a quickening spirit*” I Corinthians 15:45. Can you see it? Adam and Jesus are the beginning of two different creations. Adam, even before he disobeyed God and became a sinner by nature, was “*of the earth, earthy,*” but Jesus Christ is “*the Lord from heaven*” I Corinthians 15:47. Jesus said those who are born of flesh “*are flesh*” John 3:6, and they bear the image of the first man, Adam. Only those who are “*born of the Spirit*” are spirit. These are those who are “*born again,*” and bear the image of the Son of God Romans 8:29. They are “*new creations,*” created in the image and likeness of the Son of God

Jesus is called “*the only begotten Son of God*” John 3:16 because He was the Son of God from His mother’s womb. He did not have to be

“born again” to be the Son of God. When we were born from our mother’s womb, we were sinners by nature. There was nothing of God in us, which is the reason we must be “born” a second time, this time of the Spirit of God. Only then are we “*spirits*,” the “spirit children” of “*the Father of spirits*” Hebrews 12:9.

Soul or spirit?

A simple study of the Greek words which were translated “*soul*” and “*spirit*” in the New Testament will reveal some interesting facts. First, the word “soul” was translated from the Greek word “*psuchē*,” which means “*breath*.” The word “*spirit*” was translated from the Greek word “*pneuma*,” which also means “*breath*,” or “*a current of air*.” It is obvious that a person does not need two separate “*breaths of life*,” but that is exactly what these two words represent. “Soul” however, is the “*breath of life*” to a natural man, and “*spirit*” is the “*breath of life*” of a spiritual person. The apostle Paul said...

*“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. **As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.** And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”*

I Corinthians 15:45-49

Every person is born into this world as soul and body. We bear the image of Adam and share his fallen nature, which is “SIN.” Those who believe we were born from our mother’s womb as “spirit, soul, and body” also believe our “spirit” is a “divine spark” of God. I personally heard one of the heads of the faith movement in the very beginning of his ministry in 1971 make the statement that “*God is in every man; He must only be developed in man.*” If that were true, there would be no reason for any person to be “born again.” Can you imagine how “highly developed” Nicodemus must have been when Jesus told him “*You must be born again?*”

I heard the public statement of one of the greatest evangelists of the twentieth century after one of his sons died of an overdose of drugs. He said, which I must paraphrase because of the passage of time, *“God has not so completely separated Himself from man because of Adam’s transgression that the children of righteous parents could be lost if they have never publicly denounced Jesus Christ.”* I grieved with these parents over the loss of their drug addicted son, but I cannot change the words of Jesus, *“You must be born again.”* There is no “divine spark” in fallen humanity.

How Can These Things Be?

Jesus did not leave Nicodemus without an answer. The answer He gave, however, is absolute foolishness to many in the religious world. He spoke of the time in the wilderness that God sent *“fiery serpents”* among the people, and many of them died because of the serpents bite Numbers 21:6. This was God’s punishment against the children of Israel because of their continual *“murmuring”* against God and Moses. When the people repented, God gave an unusual cure: *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live”* Numbers 21:8. The results of believing God were immediate and wonderful: *“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived”* Numbers 21:9.

SIN is the nature (or venom) of the serpent that deceived Eve and destroyed Adam when he disobeyed God in obedience to the voice of the serpent Genesis 3:1-6. The venom spread from Adam and Eve to all their children and to every one of their descendants, which includes everyone who has ever been born into this world. All of humanity has been destroyed by the venom of the serpent, and is facing eternal damnation without a cure. Jesus, however, told Nicodemus exactly what the “cure” would be.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” John 3:14-15.

Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Now it was up to the people to believe the wonderful good news which was given to them, that *“everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live”* Numbers 21:8. Those who “believed” also turned their head to “look,” and when they beheld the serpent of brass, they “lived” Numbers 21:9. What could possibly be simpler than *“look and live?”*

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16.

These wonderful words were written by John many years after Christ died for us, and confirm the words of Jesus. Those words, *“Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish...”* had been proven thousands of times to John as he had seen vast multitudes of people saved simply by believing the message of *“Jesus Christ, and Him crucified”* I Corinthians 2:2. Everyone who looked by faith to Jesus, the Christ of eternity, lifted up on a cross to *“take away the sin of the world”* John 1:29, was immediately saved and made free from sin.

The words *“God **so loved** the world,”* do not speak of “how much” God loved us, but *“the manner”* I John 3:2 in which He loved us. Jesus said, *“...**as** Moses lifted up the serpent...**even so** must the Son of man be lifted up.”* The Greek text of John 3:16 says, *“**Because** God **in this way** loved the world, **so too** He gave His only begotten Son, **in order that** whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* The Son of God was lifted up and nailed to a roman cross in order that everyone who would believe and trust in Him would be saved from the venom of the serpent, i.e. their “sin” taken away.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” Romans 5:8.

The Power of the Cross

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin” Romans 6:6-7.

The “power of the cross” is not only that Christ died for us, but it is revealed in that we who believe also “died with Him.” We who are “*born again*” are identified with Jesus Christ in His death. When Paul said, “*our old man is crucified **with** him,*” the Greek word he used for “*with*” was the word “*sun,*” which is pronounced “*soon,*” and “*denotes union.*” Paul actually said, “*Our old man is crucified **in union with Him.***”

This is a mystery which Paul explained earlier in this same chapter, that we who are “one with Christ” were made “one” with Him in His death. Paul said, “*...so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death***” Romans 6:3. To the Colossians, he said “*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he **reconciled in the body of his flesh through death,** to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight*” Colossians 1:21-22. It is most important to understand, those whom Christ has “*reconciled*” are truly “*holy, unblameable, and unproveable*” when they stand before God in the Day of Judgment. The apostle John said, “**When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is**” I John 3:2. We shall be “*holy, unblameable, and unproveable.*”

Seeing Jesus as He Is

The matter of “seeing Jesus as He is” does not speak of His second coming. “*When He shall appear* (second coming), *we shall be like Him...*” because we see Him “*as He is*” right now, in this present existence. Many have been “rocked to sleep” with the thought that we will be “changed” from sinful to holy and from carnal to spiritual at the resurrection and second coming of Jesus Christ. It is true the apostle Paul said, “*...we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump...*” I Corinthians 15:51-52. The “*change*” he spoke of, however, is to our “*mortal body.*” At the return of Jesus Christ, according to the words of the apostle, “*the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*”

I Corinthians 15:52

*“For **this corruptible** must put on incorruption, and **this mortal** must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put*

on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” 1 Corinthians 15:53:54.

Crucified With Christ

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” Galatians 2:20.

This statement of faith given by the apostle Paul is the reality in which he lived his day to day life. This is so far from the Romans seven statement which Paul gave of “*Saul of Tarsus*” before his conversion, that it is impossible for a true “believer” to believe Paul “had a sin problem.” Those who seek to prove, in their words, “*even the great apostle Paul had a sin problem,*” are only seeking to excuse their own “sin problem.” Before his conversion on the Damascus road, Saul of Tarsus was a man who was “*blameless*” concerning all the righteousness that is in the Law of Moses Philippians 3:6, and did not consider himself to be a sinner Galatians 2:15. It was understanding the tenth commandment of God, “*Thou shalt not covet...*” Romans 7:7 that first got his attention. This commandment exposed the sin in his heart, and Saul realized for the first time in his life that he was a sinner just like the Gentiles he so despised, because of the nature of sin in his heart.

Saul had never been a sinner as far as the outward breaking of the law, and he had never felt condemned over sin in his heart until he discovered, through the tenth commandment, the damnable nature of sin. With the discovery that he was a sinner, Paul said “*all manner of concupiscence* (unclean desires)” began working in him Romans 7:8. His experience as a devout Jew deteriorated quickly as he increased in his “zeal” to persecute those who trusted in Jesus. His religion, which had satisfied him his entire lifetime, was no longer working for him. Something was wrong. Saul of Tarsus reasoned, “*Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*” Romans 7:20.

The things he did may not have been anything more than the anger, malice, and hatred against those who trusted in Jesus. He was “obsessed” with the destruction of the church as he “*breathed out threatnings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord*” Acts 9:1. His “sin” was in his heart, and when he discovered through the tenth commandment that sin in the heart **is sin**, only then did “his sin” become “*exceeding sinful*” Romans 7:13. It was the condition of Saul’s heart that warred against the law of his mind to make him a captive to sin, and ultimately erupted into the cry, “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” Romans 7:24. This must be the cry that brought Jesus to meet him on the Damascus road.

The Romans Seven Experience

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Romans 7:18

Do you believe this verse reveals the condition of those who are “born of God?” The apostle Paul will prove this is not the case in the next verse. The word “good” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “*agathos*,” which is an “intrinsic word.” It is the same Greek word that was used when Jesus said, “*There is none good but God*” Matthew 10:18. The apostle John wrote, “*If ye know that He (God) is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him*” I John 2:29. There is that “*righteousness*” that can only be defined as “the righteousness that God is,” and everyone who does “that righteousness” is born of God.

The same rule applies to this intrinsic word for “the good that only God is.” Saul of Tarsus was a man who was “*blameless*” according to all the righteousness that was in the Law of Moses Philippians 3:6. He was a “good man” with all the “goodness” the law could give, yet there was none of “the good that God is” in Saul of Tarsus. Understand Paul’s words to say of Saul, “...in me dwelleth no ‘God thing’” Saul of Tarsus was not “born of God” at the time spoken of in this verse. The “proof” is in the next verse.

*“For the **good** that I would I **do** not: but the **evil** which I would not, that I **do**.”* Romans 7:19

Notice the words I have highlighted in bold. In these words is the proof that Saul of Tarsus was not “born of God” at this time. The first highlighted word is “*good*,” which we have previously shown to be an intrinsic value. It speaks of the “good that God is.” This is the “*good*” that Saul could not do.

The second highlighted word is “*do*,” which was translated from the Greek word “*poieo*,” which means “*to make or do*,” and refers to “a single act.” Saul of Tarsus could not do a single act of “*the good that God is*.”

The third highlighted word is “*evil*,” which is translated from the Greek word “*kakos*,” which means “intrinsically worthless.” It speaks of all the things a religious man may do which are of absolutely no value, and will not be accepted by God. They may be great and mighty works, yet they are “worthless.” Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees, “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves*” Matthew 23:15. Consider that we could send missionaries into every nation on earth, and if we preach a “gospel” that does not “free them from sin” who believe it, we have done absolutely nothing which God will accept. We can “*bestow all our goods to feed the poor*,” out of the “goodness of our own hearts,” and it will “*profit us nothing*” I Corinthians 13:3.

The third and last word I have highlighted in this verse is the second usage of the word “*do*,” which was translated from the Greek word “*prasso*,” which means “*to practise, that is, perform repeatedly or habitually (thus differing from G4160, which properly refers to a single act)*” Strong’s Greek Dictionary. Taking into account the several different Greek words Paul used in this verse, it becomes clear that he was speaking about the experience of Saul of Tarsus before his conversion, that “*evil*” was his “habitual practice.”

“The good that I wanted to do, I could not do a single act, but the evil I did not want to do, that was my habitual practice.”

The apostle John said, “*Whosoever is born of God doeth not commit sin...*” I John 3:9. The Greek word which was translated “commit” is “*poieo*,” meaning “to make or do (a single act).” We are often told that John’s words should have been translated to say we do not “practice sin.” Such teaching simply is not true! If John had wanted to say the children of God “do not practice sin,” he would have used the word “*prasso*,” which means “to practice.” John did not use the word “*prasso*” in his epistles; instead, he said those who are “born of God” do not commit “a single act of sin (*poieo*).” How could they? Sin is nothing more or less than “the nature of the serpent.” This explains why John would say, “*He that committeth sin (a single act) is of the devil...*” I John 3:8, and why he reiterates repeatedly that the children of God are not sinners.

“*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...*” I John 5:18.

A Single Act

If a person who believes the gospel truth is to live “*free from sin*,” and not commit “a single act,” they must “*know what sin **isn’t***,” because there is always someone ready to tell you “what sin is.” The scribes and Pharisees had a “sin test” even Jesus Christ, the Son of God, could not pass. They said of Jesus, “*We know that this man is a sinner*” John 9:24. Their charge against Jesus was that He did not “*keep the Sabbath*.” He often healed the sick on the Sabbath, and seemed to disregard the law of the Sabbath Day’s journey when He and His disciples walked through the corn fields on the Sabbath, plucking corn and eating it without washing their hands. Luke 6:1-11. The Pharisees said, “*This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day*” John 9:16.

The apostle John wrote, “*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*” I John 3:4. The Greek text is better understood to say, “*Whosoever commiteth sin committeth also lawlessness*.” Those who commit sin do not have God’s law written in their heart, therefore they have a heart that is “lawless.” God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah to promise a “new covenant,” in which He would “*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and*

they shall be my people” Jeremiah 31:33. He spoke through the prophet Ezekiel to promise “*a new heart*” and “*a new spirit*” to His people Ezekiel 36:26. The promise of the “New Covenant” is a “*new creation*,” in which every person is a “*new creature*” II Corinthians 5:17-18, with “*a new heart*” and “*a new spirit*, after which God said, “*...and I will put my spirit (the Holy Ghost) within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*” Ezekiel 36:26

The words God spoke from Mount Sinai to the children of Israel are what we call “*the Ten Commandments*.” If the children of Israel had received the words of God, He would have “written them in their heart,” and the “Law of Moses” would never have been added Galatians 3:19. Instead, as the prophet Zechariah said, “*They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law...*” Zechariah 7:11-12. The “adamant stone” is the diamond, the hardest stone known to man. God wrote His law in tables of stone because they were not as “hard” as the hearts of His chosen people.

If they would have received His words into their heart, they would have been His “*peculiar treasure*,” His “*kingdom of priests*,” and His “*holy nation*” Exodus 19:5:6. The children of Israel never attained to that blessing, however; it was reserved for those who would be “*born of God*” I Peter 2:9-10.

Those who continue to believe the “*Law of God*” and the “*Law of Moses*” are one and the same will never understand the “truth” which Jesus said “*will make you free*” John 8:32. The “*Law of God*” is the “law” that is “*established by faith*” Romans 3:31 when it is written in the heart of those who are “born of God.” The “*Law of Moses*” is the law that was “*abolished*” Ephesians 2:15, and “*disannulled ...for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof*” Hebrews 7:18.

The Law of Moses controlled every detail of the life of those under it. Paul said those who are “*of the works of the law* (the Law of Moses) *are under the curse*” Galatians 3:10. The law itself was the curse which was on those who trusted in it. Consider this. The Law of Moses commanded the woman caught in the act of adultery to be

stoned to death ^{John 8:4-5}. Some might see that as a just punishment, but what about the man who was gathering sticks on the Sabbath Day? He also was “stoned to death” ^{Numbers 5:32-36}. Please keep in mind, this was “the Law of Moses,” not “the Law of God.”

There are many religious leaders today who are equally as harsh as Moses in their judgments. These are like those Jesus spoke of, who “...bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers” ^{Matthew 23:4}. Some of these would send a woman to hell if she trimmed her hair. Many years ago I was condemned by a man for wearing a wrist watch. If I am to please God and live without committing a single act of sin, I cannot allow such people to define sin for me. God is the judge, and He will judge according to His law, which He has written in the heart of those who are “born of God.”

The apostle Paul defined sin for us in his epistles. “*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither **fornicators**, nor **idolaters**, nor **adulterers**, nor **effeminate**, nor **abusers of themselves with mankind**, nor **thieves**, nor **covetous**, nor **drunkards**, nor **revilers**, nor **extortioners**, shall inherit the kingdom of God*” ^{I Corinthians 6:9-10}. Those who are “born of God” and “abide in Christ” ^{I John 3:6}, cannot “be” or “do” a single act of these things mentioned. There are no exceptions. Those who do such things either have never been saved, or they have moved away from Christ and are lost. There is no middle ground.

The End of the “Wretched Man”

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

^{Romans 7:24-25}

The power of the cross is to crucify. It is the end of the “old wretched man” ^{Romans 6:6}, and the resurrection is the birth of the “new man” ^{1 Peter 1:3}. Our “faith” should not be “in the cross,” but in “the Christ” who died on the cross. The “cross” is not the source of anything, because it is the end of everything that came into the world with sin. It was on the cross that “the seed of the woman bruised the head of the serpent” ^{Genesis 3:15}, and “...that through death, He might destroy

him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” Hebrews 2:14. It was on the cross that the *“works of the devil were destroyed”* I John 3:8. It was on the cross that sin was *“taken away”* John 1:29, I John 3:5, out of the heart and nature of *“everyone who believeth”* Romans 1:16. It was on the cross that Christ *“finished the transgression, made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity”* Daniel 9:24. It was with His resurrection that He brought in *“everlasting righteousness.”* With *“the transgression finished,”* the law of Moses, which was *“added because of transgressions”* Galatians 3:19, was *“abolished”* II Corinthian 3:13, Ephesians 2:15, and we were *“made free from sin”* Romans 6:7, 18, 22, to *“serve God in newness of Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”*
Romans 7:6

When Saul of Tarsus first discovered He was a sinner, it was a devastating experience that shook him to the foundation of who he was. His was the opposite experience of many modern “Christians” of today. Saul was very devout in the Jew’s religion. He had numerous reasons to believe he could “trust in the flesh;” He was *“...circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”* Philippians 3:5-6. Everything he trusted in gave him reason to believe he was righteous.

The opposite experience is the one who professes to be a “Christian,” while continuing in sin. Their “doctrine” has deceived them. Their hearts are blinded to the truth. They believe they have a “savior” who has saved them from the “penalty” and “punishment” of sin, totally ignorant of the fact that Christ died *“to make an end of sins”* Daniel 9:24-25, and to *“take sin away”* I John 3:5, out of the heart and nature of those who believe the truth and trust in Him. These live their lives in relative happiness, without being much disturbed by the prospect of standing before God in the judgment. Their teachers have assured them their sins will never be judged, because they *“believe in Jesus.”* Their neighbor may actually live a better lifestyle, but they will be judged for their sins because they have not “believed in Jesus.” This kind of “Christians” go to churches where the preacher reminds them in every service that “we are all sinners,

who sin every day,” and they actually feel “spiritual” when they say such things. Imagine the devastation they experience when they wake up to realize they really are sinners, and not only are they sinners, but they are slaves to sin, “...without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world” Ephesians 2:12.

Cornelius

*“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, **A devout man**, and one **that feared God** with all his house, **which gave much alms** to the people, **and prayed to God** alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day **an angel of God coming in to him**, and saying unto him, Cornelius ...”* Acts 10:1-3.

What a wonderful man this Cornelius was. Any pastor would love to have a church filled with those like him. He was a “*devout man*,” who “*feared God*,” and gave a lot of money. He prayed to God all the time, and not only prayed, but he “fasted and prayed” Acts 10:30. God took note of his continual praying and giving, and in a “*vision*” while he was fasting and praying, sent an angel to him. Obviously, in the sight of others, this man Cornelius must have been a “spiritual giant,” a great man of God. There was only one problem; He was not saved, and did not know how to be saved. The angel came to Cornelius to tell him where to find Peter, who shall “*tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house **shall be saved***” Acts 11:13-14.

Consider for a moment, if you were Peter, what words could you tell this man for him to be saved? Would you ask Cornelius to “repeat a sinner’s prayer” with you? If you did, Cornelius would still be lost. The words that would save Cornelius were words he must hear from the mouth of Peter, but what would they be? The fact is, Peter spoke only 217 words in less than 90 seconds, before the scripture says, “*While Peter was yet speaking, the Holy Ghost fell of all them which heard the word*” Acts 10:44. What were the words Peter spoke?

He told just a little of the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed “*with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the*

devil... ” Acts 10:38. He told of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Acts 10:39-40. Peter said he was an eye witness to the resurrection of Jesus, and had eaten and drank with him after he was raised from the dead. He explained to Cornelius that Jesus is the one whom God has appointed to be the judge of the living and the dead. Nothing Peter has said to this point can account for the powerful salvation and baptism Cornelius and others of his house were about to receive. Words of *“Spirit and life”* are required to bring life to those who believe them.

Doctrines, while they may be good, cannot bring salvation to their believer. Neither can sad stories nor emotional eruptions. Only words of Spirit and life, such as Jesus spoke John 6:63 can bring life to those who believe them. The moment of release came with just a few words which took Peter less than ten seconds to speak:

*“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name **whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.** While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word”* Acts 10:43-44.

Remission of Sins

The word “remission” which Peter used when speaking to Cornelius was translated from the Greek word *“aphesis,”* which means *“freedom.”* Peter did not speak to Cornelius about “forgiveness of sins,” but “freedom from sin.” This was the end of a long search for Cornelius. He knew his heart, and the things that worked in his heart. He did not seek forgiveness for the things in his heart and mind, but “freedom...glorious freedom.” In a moment of time, his heart was washed from all sin, and made to be pure. Peter testified of this some months later at a conference in Jerusalem, giving the testimony of how God saved these uncircumcised Gentiles:

*“And God, **which knoweth the hearts,** bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, **purifying their hearts by faith.** ”*

Acts 15:8-9

God, who *“knoweth the hearts,”* does not give the Holy Ghost to those with unclean hearts. Our forefathers in Pentecost understood

this; God will not fill an “unclean vessel” with His precious Holy Spirit. Cornelius, with all his devoutness, prayers, fasting, and giving, had been an “unclean vessel” when Peter first arrived at his house. When he heard the “*word of truth*” ^{Ephesians 1:13} which poured through Peter, he believed and trusted in the Jesus Christ Peter spoke of. He heard for the first time in his life that he could be “*free from sin*” ^{Romans 6:7, 18, 22}. His “*freedom*” would come by trusting in Him of whom “*all the prophets*” said would bring “*freedom from sin*” to everyone who “*believeth in Him*” ^{Acts 10:43}. Cornelius believed the truth he heard, trusted in the one who “*loved him, and gave Himself for him*” ^{Galatians 2:20}, and “*While Peter yet spake **these words**, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard **the word**.*” ^{Acts 10:44}.

It sounds like a contradiction to say not everyone in the house of Cornelius received the Holy Ghost that day. Notice the scripture speaks of “*all them which heard **the word**.*” It did not speak of “all them who heard the words of Peter.” The answer to the simple mystery is found in the Greek word “*logos*,” which was translated “*the word*,” and the Greek word “*rhema*,” which was translated “*these words*.” Both “*logos*” and “*rhema*” can refer to human conversation, but only “*logos*,” when it is preceded with the definite article “*the*,” speaks of “*Christ*” as “*the divine expression of God*”

^{Strong's Greek Dictionary #3056}.

Peter spoke “*rhema (these words)*” to all the people, but only those who heard “*the logos (Christ, the divine expression)*” received the Holy Ghost on that day. If we can understand this, we will understand why “*doctrine*” alone can never save a soul, regardless of how “*sound*” it may be. We must hear Christ.

Those who “Hear the Son of God”

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” ^{John 5:25}

We are living in “*the hour*” which Jesus said “*is coming*.” He was speaking in “*the hour*” He said “*now is*.” Jesus said, “*...the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.*”

This statement was true in His day when they could see and hear Him in the flesh, and it is true today almost two thousand years after His ascension to sit with the Father. “*The dead*” Jesus referred to in this amazing statement are those whom Paul referred to as “*dead in trespasses and sins*” Ephesians 2:1. Jesus spoke of these “*dead*” to Martha, the sister of Lazarus; “*...he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die...*” John 11:25-26.

There were those who heard the words of Jesus many times, who never “heard His Word.” Jesus seemed exasperated with some Jews who claimed to “*believe*” in Him John 8:30-32. He said to them, “*Why do ye not understand my speech (words)? Even because ye cannot hear my word (logos)*” John 8:43. The words of Jesus were more than the words of a man; they were “*the divine expression of God*” to those who could hear them.

The words of this book you are reading are only words written on paper and given freely to everyone who wishes to receive them. This little book is only one of several hundred which I have written in the years since I first received the understanding of “*the truth*” which Jesus said “*shall make you free*” John 8:32. The point I make is this: There are those who have received dozens of these messages, and have never read anything in them which affected their spiritual life in any way whatsoever. There are those, however, who have picked up a single book that was discarded by another person, and rejoiced to hear what they had never heard before. The testimonies are numerous of those who have “*been made free from sin*” as “*the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shined unto them*” II Corinthians 4:4. These are those who have “*heard the voice of the Son of God,*” and they “*live.*”

Being Born Again

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” I Peter 1:23.

The term “*being born again*” does not speak of a process, but of a finished fact. It speaks of our “*being*” as a child of God. Those who

are “*born again*” are born of the “*incorruptible seed*,” which is “*the Word (logos) of God*.” The word, “word,” in this verse should have been capitalized, because it was translated from the Greek word “*logos*” and not “*rhema*.” I have never understood the excitement in this generation over the Greek word “*rhema*” instead of “*logos*.” The word “*rhema*,” is defined as “*an utterance (individually, collectively or specifically); by implication a matter or topic (especially of narration, command or dispute); with a negative naught whatever*” (see Strong’s #4487).

“Logos” is defined by “Strong’s” as “*something said (including the thought); by implication a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension a computation; specifically (with the article in John) the Divine Expression (that is, Christ)*” (see Strong’s #3056). While we understand the ancient philosophers used the word “logos” as “logic,” the apostle John added the definite article “the,” and forever changed the meaning for the Christian believer to “*the Divine Expression (Christ)*.” John began His gospel saying, “*In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word** was God*” John 1:1. Fourteen verses later, he wrote, “*...and **the Word** was made flesh, and dwelt among us...*” John 1:14. “*The Word*” for all eternity, is Christ. “*The Word made flesh*” is Jesus, who is “*the Christ, the Son of God*” Matthew 16:16, our Lord and savior.

“*...not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible...*” Every one of us were born into this present world of the “*corruptible seed*” of Adam, which we received from our parents. This is another reason we must be “*born again*” to enter the kingdom of God John 3:5. The “*incorruptible seed*” which we are “*born again*” of is Christ (The Logos). Christ, who was “*in the beginning with God, and was God...*,” is “*the seed*” that conceived in the womb of the young virgin Mary to bring forth baby Jesus, whom she wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. The angel Gabriel appeared that same night to shepherds in the field, saying, “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger*” Luke 2:11-12.

We were born into this world “*of corruptible seed,*” and we were sinners by nature. “*Being born again of incorruptible seed...*,” we are birthed into the kingdom of God, and we are righteous by nature. We are the “*seed*” which David saw following the sufferings and death of Jesus, which he described perfectly in the 22nd Psalm.

“A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.”

Psalms 22:30-31

This “righteous seed,” which David saw a thousand years before Calvary, are the result of Christ’s death on the cross. These are those who are “*born again,*” this time “*born of God.*” Peter said “*the Spirit of Christ*” was in the prophets to foretell “*the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*” I Peter 1:10-11. The “*glory*” that followed “*the sufferings of Christ*” is the new creation of the sons of God. They are a people such as has never existed on earth since the fall of Adam. They have the “*new heart*” and “*new spirit*” which God promised Ezekiel 36:26. In fact, Christ is their “*new spirit*” Romans 8:9. God’s law Jeremiah 31:33 and the sayings of Jesus Matthew 7:24 are written in their new heart. Righteousness is their new nature, and they “*do by nature the things contained in the law*” Romans 2:14, because God’s “*law*” is written in their heart.

*“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: **That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,** who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”* Romans 8:4.

Changed from Glory to Glory

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” II Corinthians 3:18

This verse has often been quoted to show a “process” in the change that takes place in a child of God. According to the popular thinking, we move “from glory to glory” in an endless series of “glories,” each one being a little higher than the previous. This scripture actually

denies any such process. Consider the verses leading up to this text which give a comparison between two totally opposite “glories.”

*“But if the **ministration of death**, written and engraven in stones, was **glorious**, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for **the glory of his countenance**; which glory was to be done away: **How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?**”* II Corinthians 3:7-8.

The two “glories” in question are the glory of two covenants, the old and the new. The first was the “glory” of “*the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones,*” which amazingly was the “glory” seen “*in the face of Moses.*” The second “glory” is “*the ministration of the Spirit,*” which “glory” is seen “*in the face of Jesus Christ*” II Corinthians 4:6. Notice how Paul continues to compare the glory of the two covenants for the next several verses.

*“For if the **ministration of condemnation** (law) **be glory**, much more doth the **ministration of righteousness** (grace) **exceed in glory**”* II Corinthians 3:9.

*“For even **that which was made glorious** (law) **had no glory** in this respect, **by reason of the glory that excelleth** (grace).”*

II Corinthians 3:10

*“For if **that which is done away** (law) **was glorious**, much more **that which remaineth** (grace) **is glorious**”* II Corinthians 3:11.

When Moses came down the mountain from God after receiving the commandment written in stone the second time, “*the glory of his countenance*” was such that the children of Israel could not “*steadfastly*” look upon him II Corinthians 3:7. It is common to believe Moses’ face was shining with the glory of God, but not according to the apostle Paul. He said “*the glory*” in “*the face of Moses*” was “the glory” of “*the ministration of death,*” which was “*to be done away*” II Corinthians 3:7. While it remained, however, the “glory” was such that the children of Israel could not bear to look upon Moses until a vail was placed over his face Exodus 34:29-33.

“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the

children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished” II Corinthians 3:12-13.

According to the apostle Paul, the Law of Moses was “*added because of transgressions, till the seed (Christ) should come to whom the promise was made*” Galatians 3:19. The “*transgression*” of the children of Israel was when they turned from God to look to Moses. The scripture says, “*...they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die*” Exodus 20:19. If the children of Israel could have seen “*to the end (final result)*” of trusting Moses before they turned from God at Sinai, certainly their attitude would have been different, as well as their history. Having turned from God to Moses, they received the “*Law of Moses,*” and not the “*Law of God.*” Moses’ law became a vail over their hearts to blind their minds to the truth until Christ would come to redeem them from that law Galatians 4:4.

By contrast, we who see the glory of God “*in the face of Jesus Christ*” II Corinthians 4:6, use “*great plainness of speech.*” We preach the gospel of Christ clearly, as it is, and not as those who are still, unto this day, “*blinded*” by “*the glory in the face of Moses.*” There are multitudes today, Jews and Gentiles alike, who believe the Law of Moses is a great blessing to them. The apostle Paul, who was born and raised under the law, knew different. He called it “*the yoke of bondage*” Galatians 5:1. He said to those Gentiles who turned from Christ to trust in Moses and his law, “*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*” Galatians 5:4. He said of the Jews, who were under the law from their youth, “*...as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse*” Galatians 3:10.

Blinded by the Law

“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart” II Corinthians 3:14-15.

Notice it is the “heart” of those who trust in Moses that is blinded to the gospel. It is also “the heart” of that same person which must “*turn to the Lord*” if they are to be “made free” John 8:32.

“Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away” II Corinthians 3:16.

Now we can understand the meaning of the apostle’s words when he speaks of “...*from glory to glory.*”

“But we all, with open face...” Our hearts have turned from Moses to Christ. The “vail” has been taken away that we might see.

“...beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord...” The “glory of the Lord” is “*in the face of Jesus Christ*” II Corinthians 4:6, and not “*in the face of Moses*” II Corinthians 3:7. Those who see “the glory in the face of Moses” are blinded, but those who see “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” are “*changed into the same image.*” Jesus Christ is “*the image of the invisible God*” Colossians 1:15. He is “...*the brightness of His (God’s) glory, the express image of His person*” Hebrews 1:3.” He is the “mirror image” of God, who reflects the glory of God into our hearts when we “turn” and “look” to Him. We are “*illuminated*” by “*the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God*” II Corinthians 4:4-6. He “illuminates” those whose heart turns to Him, so that others also might see, believe, and turn to Jesus Christ.

“...are changed into the same image...” The apostle John said, “...*we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*” I John 3:2. God created man in His image and likeness in the beginning. Sin destroyed that creation, but God has predestined His new Creation “*to be conformed to the image of His Son...*” Romans 8:29.

“...from glory to glory...” The words “*from glory to glory*” speak of those whose heart turns from Moses to see Jesus, who is “*the Christ*” Daniel 9:24-27 of prophecy. They turn from the glory of the Old Covenant, which blinds their minds, to the glory of the New Covenant which illuminates. They are transformed from the glory of death and condemnation, to the glory of “Spirit and Life.”

“...even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” The “*Spirit of the Lord*” in this verse does not refer to the Holy Ghost. It is Christ who died for

us, who shed His precious blood for our cleansing I John 1:7, Hebrews 13:12. It is the “*Spirit of Christ*” who transforms us and gives us life and light with His entrance Romans 8:9-10. Paul confirmed this in this same text when he said, “*Now **the Lord is that Spirit**: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*” II Corinthians 3:17. Jesus Christ is “*the Lord from heaven*” I Corinthians 15:47.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” II Corinthians 4:6

Knowing that we Know

Over twenty years after the death of the other apostles, the apostle John wrote his first epistle to define for all time the truth from the lie, the light from the darkness, and the children of God from the children of the devil. He drew a distinct line between each of these, so we, almost two thousand years later, could understand the difference, and what made the difference. He gave several tests whereby we could know ourselves, one of which I call the “*hereby test*.”

1. “*Hereby we do know that we know him*” I John 2:3.
2. “*Hereby know we that we are in him*” I John 2:5.
3. “*Hereby perceive (know) we the love of God*” I John 3:16.
4. “*Hereby we know that we are of the truth*” I John 3: 19.:
5. “*Hereby we know that he abideth in us*” I John 3:24.:
6. “*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God*” I John 4:2.
7. “*Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*”
I John 4:6
8. “*Hereby know we that we dwell in him*” I John 4:13.

The first of these says, “*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments*” I John 2:3. Notice that he did not say “*We know Him if we keep His commandments.*” Many people are “*commandment keepers*” who do not “*know Him.*” Saul of Tarsus was a “*commandment keeper,*” who kept the commandments “*blamelessly*” Philippians 3:6, but he did not know Christ. John said, “*We do know **that we know him**...,*” not if we keep his

commandments as a commandment keeper, but because they are written in our heart. If it is our new nature to *“love our enemy, turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile, do good to those who hate us,”* etc., it is because we *“know Him.”* These are the “sayings of Jesus” which are also “written in the new heart” of those who are “born of God.” John said, *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”* I John 5:3.

Any sincere person who will go to these test scriptures, and study them in context with those verses which are written both before and after, will learn much about their own relationship with God. There is another list which John gives in his epistle by which we can know with full assurance if we are *“born of God.”* These we will study for the remainder of this message.

Whosoever is Born of God

Jesus established the fact that we must be *“born again”* of the Spirit of God. If we are not *“born of God,”* we can neither *“see”* nor *“enter”* the kingdom of God. In fact, our “new birth” is our entrance into the kingdom of God, where we *“abide in Christ.”* Peter established how we are *“born again”* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead I Peter 1:3. He also establishes that everyone who is born of God is born of the *“incorruptible seed,”* which is Christ. The apostle John, writing over twenty years after Peter’s martyrdom, established exactly how we can know whether we are *“born of God.”* John is the only writer of scriptures who uses the term *“born of God.”* He gives six ways to recognize those who have in fact been “born again” of the Spirit of God, and God Himself is their “Father.” We will look at these one at a time.

1: *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him”* I John 2:29.

The apostle John gives a qualifying statement along with almost every statement he makes concerning those who are *“born of God.”* In the first statement, *“everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him,”* the “qualifying statement” is *“If you know that He (God) is righteous.”* Almost everyone believes “God is righteous.” Most of

these, however, believe that “righteousness” defines what God is, when in fact “what God is,” defines what righteousness is. Man can hold to very high standards of conduct and do great acts of charity, and not be “righteous” with the “righteousness of God.” Paul said, “...*though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*”

I Corinthians 13:3

A person could operate the greatest charitable organization in the world, and give everything they possessed personally to feed the poor, and not be “*born of God*” with “*the love of God*” working in them. There are those who are capable of wonderful acts of love for their fellow man, who are not “born of God.” The wonderful things they do are the product of human love, but not the “love of God,” which Paul calls “charity.”

Martin Luther believed there are two kinds of righteousness. He called them “passive righteousness” and “active righteousness.” Luther was correct in believing that our “active righteousness” is not acceptable to God if we do not first possess the “passive righteousness.” The modern church has twisted this doctrine into the idea that our “passive righteousness” is only “the way God sees us,” when in fact, our “passive righteousness” is the “*new heart, new spirit, and new nature*” of the children of God. These are not “maintained” through great effort on our part, because they are “passively ours.”

Before I understood the truth which Jesus said would “*make us free*” John 32:8, I maintained an “active righteousness” which God could not receive because it was through great effort that I presented myself to be “holy.” When Christ purified my heart by faith (faith in the blood of Christ), I received passive righteousness, which became my new nature, and true holiness became my fruit Romans 6:22. Even so it is with everyone who knows the truth and is “*born of God.*”

“*What God is,*” defines what true righteousness is. The person who is not “*born of God*” may be very devout in their religion, and do many wonderful works, even using the name of Jesus Matthew 7:22-23,

but they cannot do a single act of “*the righteousness that God is.*” Paul explained freedom from sin in his epistle to the Romans; “*For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*” Romans 6;20-22.

The “*servant of sin*” cannot commit a single act of righteousness, because they are “*free from righteousness.*” Even so, those who are “*free from sin*” cannot commit a single act of sin, because “SIN” is not in their heart or nature. They are “*free from sin.*” Based upon this fact of the gospel, the apostle John said, “*...everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him.*” A “single act” of “the righteousness that God is,” proves a person is “born of God,” but it will never be a “single act,” because “righteousness” has become their new nature and their practice.

2: “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin...*” I John 3:9.

Certainly this statement by John is very clear in its meaning. The “qualifying statement” follows in the same verse: “*...for His seed remaineth in Him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*”

“His seed” in this verse speaks of those who are “*born of God;*” they are “the seed of God” which David foresaw in the Psalms.

“A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.”

Psalms 22:30-31

I John 3:9 is a simple confirmation of verses 5-6 of this same chapter; “*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not....*” Those who are “*born of God*” are “*the seed of God,*” and “*His seed* (God’s children) *remaineth (abideth) in Him, and cannot sin....*”

The secret of the “rest” which we have in Christ is found in the words most hated by many who profess to believe. Those words are “*cannot sin*” as they are found in this verse. We are not “free from sin” because we have “power over sin;” we are “free” only because

Christ has died, and has “taken our sin away,” and we have it no more. Sin is nothing more or less than “*the nature of the serpent*” which deceived Eve and caused Adam to disobey God. John confirmed this when he wrote, “***He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil***” I John 3:8

When Adam obeyed the voice of the serpent, he submitted to the nature of the serpent, which we call “the sin nature.” Everyone who is born into this world is born with that evil nature abiding in them. Sufficient reason for Jesus to say, “*You must be born again.*” Those who are “born of God” do not have a sin nature. Sin entered into the world through Adam, but Christ came into the world “*to make an end of sin*” Daniel 9:24. He suffered and died as “*the Lamb of God*” to “*take away the sin of the world*” John 1:29. Those who believe Jesus is “*the Christ, the Son God which should come into the world*” John 11:27 and fully “trust in Him” Ephesians 1:12 have their sin taken away and are “*born of God.*”

3: “...every one that loveth is **born of God**, and knoweth God.”

I John 4:7

John’s “qualifying statement” for this verse is found in the next verse; “*God is love.*” Again, “love” does not define what God is, but “*what God is*” defines love. Human love does not qualify. Paul said “*though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned*” out of human love, if he did not have “*the love that God is,*” it would “*profit me nothing*” I Corinthians 13:3.

“*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” Romans 5:8

“*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*” I John 4:10

“*Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*”

I John 4:11

Human love could cause us to give our life to save a friend, but the love of God caused Jesus Christ to lay down His life to save His enemies Romans 5:7-8. That same “love that God is” is the reason Jesus

could say, “**Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven**” Matthew 5:45.

No one can “love their enemies” in order to qualify as a child of God. We love our enemies **because we are** “*born of God.*”

4: “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is **born of God**....*”

I John 5:1

God sent the angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel to tell of the coming of “*The Christ* (The Messiah the Prince Daniel 9:25)” into the world. His mission would be; “*...to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness...*” Daniel 9:24. He would be “*cut off, but not for Himself* (rejected and crucified)” Daniel 9:26. We profess to believe “*Jesus is the Christ.*” Do we believe Jesus “*made reconciliation for iniquity?*” Most of us do, and even acknowledge this to be a doctrine necessary for salvation. Do we believe Jesus “*made an end of sins*” through His death on the cross? Consider this carefully. If we believe Jesus “*took the penalty for our sins,*” but did not “*make an end of sins,*” we do not believe Jesus is “*the Christ.*”

We believe it is a necessary doctrine of the church to believe Jesus was “*born of a virgin.*” He is both “*Immanuel*” Isaiah 7:14, and “*the seed of the woman*” Genesis 3:15, whom God said would “*bruise the head of the serpent.*” Do we believe Jesus died on the cross, as the apostle Paul said, “*...that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*” Hebrews 2:14. This is what it means to “*believe that Jesus is the Christ.*” Those who do not believe these things about Jesus are those who are destined to go through life proclaiming, “We are all sinners,” only because they do not believe the gospel of Christ. Unless they believe, they will die in their sins, and be forever lost John 8:24.

5: “*For whatsoever (whosoever) is **born of God** overcometh the world...*” I John 5:4.

The word “*whatsoever*” was translated from the Greek word “*pas*, ” which was translated “*whosoever*” in verse one. The “qualifying statement” for those who “overcome the world” is found in this same verse; they are “*born of God*.” The definition of “*pas*” is “*all, any, every, the whole*” Strong’s Greek Dictionary. There can be no exceptions; everyone who is born of God, “*overcometh the world*.”

John spoke to the new converts, saying, “*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*” I John 4:4. When John says to the “*little children*” (new converts), “*ye are of God*,” He reminds them, they are “*born of God*,” and God is their Father. John had warned them in previous verses against false teachers and false prophets, who were “*of the spirit of antichrist*.” His message to everyone who is “born of God” is the same; “*You have overcome them* (those who are of antichrist’ spirit), *because greater is He* (Spirit of Christ) *that is in you, than he* (spirit of antichrist) *that is in the world*.” We are “overcomers” because we are “*born of God*.” It is Christ who died for us Romans 8:34, and it is Christ who lives within us Galatians 2:20.

“*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death*” Revelations 12:11.

6: “We know that whosoever is *born of God* sinneth not...”

I John 5:18

This sixth statement of absolute truth concerning those who are “born of God” confirms the second; “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*” I John 3:9. Both John and Paul say these same things so repeatedly that no sincere believer can doubt the truth of their statements. The only “qualifying statement” that can be given for those who “do not sin” in thought, word, or deed, is they are “*born of God*” and they “*abide in Christ*” I John 3:6.

John gave this last confirmation of those who are “*born of God*” as the first of three verses in which he summarizes the message of his epistle. Each of these verses begin with the words “we know,” which serves to confirm to us that which was common knowledge to his generation of the church.

“And we know that we are of God (those who are born of God), and the whole world lieth in wickedness.” I John 5:19.

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true...” I John 5:20.

These verses summarize John’s message which he wrote for the believers of every generation from then to now. He wrote in the fourth verse of this epistle, *“These things write we unto you, that (in order that) your joy may be full”* I John 1:4. If we believe the things John wrote in his epistle, we will overflow with the joy of *“knowing Christ.”* He began the second chapter with the words, *“these things write I unto you, that (in order that) ye sin not...”* I John 2:1. This is not a “commandment not to sin.” Instead, if we believe what John wrote, we “will not sin,” because Christ has taken our sin away I John 3:5, and we are no longer sinners.

Many seem to believe John’s purpose in this epistle was to say everyone is a sinner. Their favorite verse is, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”* I John 1:8. John wrote those words to confirm his previous words, *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth”* I John 1:6. If you believe a child of God is still a sinner, there is much more to John’s first epistle than you have been told, and *“the light of the glorious gospel of Christ”* has not shined unto you. Why not read John’s first epistle for yourself in a KJV and believe exactly what John says? The “light” will dawn in your heart II Peter 1:19, and you will begin your walk with God in the light of life. You will discover the truth Jesus spoke when He said *“My yoke is easy, and my burden is light”* Matthew 11:30. You will enter into rest and at the same time you will bring forth the fruit of holiness. You will be “passive,” and accomplish more in the kingdom of Christ than you ever imagined, because God will be very “active.” You will discover your life in Christ to be exactly as the apostle said, *“righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”* Romans 14:17.

A Final Thought

In January 1974, President Richard Nixon signed a federal law reducing the speed limit to 55mph on all the highways in America. I owned a 1969 Lincoln Continental that was capable of doing well over 120 mph, and my driving practice was to drive 85 to 90 mph everywhere I went. I had received so few speeding tickets in my lifetime that I saw no problem with speeding. When the speed limit was lowered to 55 mph, however, the state troopers started enforcing the limit strictly, and I got so many tickets in a very short time, that my insurance agent told me that one more ticket would throw me into a risk pool, and my policy would increase by \$1000.00 per year. I had been willing to pay the tickets, but I couldn't afford that kind of insurance. I had a very real problem, because it seemed I could not stop speeding, but had reached a place in my life that I had to. After a short time I came up with a surefire answer: I actually gave my Lincoln to a preacher friend in Arkansas and bought a Volkswagen van for my family car. Instead of having over 400 hp under the hood, this car had a 36 hp air cooled engine that would do 55 mph at top speed. It was the perfect answer for me. I could keep my foot to the floor, drive the car full speed, and it actually felt like it was going faster than the Lincoln did at 90 mph. I never got another speeding ticket as long as I drove the VW van.

My answer was not that I had “power over speeding;” that didn't work for me. The officer could tell me, “*you cannot speed,*” but he was only stating what the law said. When I changed cars, I could drive full speed, and say, “*I cannot speed,*” and it was true.

Those who have believed the truth and been made “*free from sin*” have not received “power over sin;” that is not God's way. In fact, they have been “disabled from sinning,” because “*sin*” has been taken out of their heart, and their “*new heart,*” which they have received from God, does not have the ability to sin. Believe me, “*Christ in you*” is not a VW van, but neither is He a “460 Continental.” If He is truly your life, living in you, He does not have the ability to sin, and neither do you as long as you “*abide in Him.*”

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