

BEING BORN AGAIN

This paper is intended to be compilation of facts and quotes regarding the topic of the New Birth.

We must first examine what Jesus said about the New Birth:

John 3:3-8 “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

We see that unless a man is born again, 1) he cannot *see* the kingdom of God and 2) he cannot *enter* the kingdom of God. So, unless someone is born again, they can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God. This makes it a matter of importance. Furthermore, Jesus clarifies the distinction between the man born of flesh and the man born of spirit. You, in your physical body are flesh. You are tangible and may be seen, touched and you have body mass. That which is born of Spirit is spirit. It is intangible, may not be seen, touched, and does not have tangible body mass.

Jesus describes one who is born of the Spirit as having the characteristics of wind in several regards. The word ‘bloweth’ means to breathe hard or blow. *Listeth* is from the Greek word *thelo* which means ‘to determine, option, choose, prefer, be inclined, delight in, desire, be disposed, love, please’. Now lets compare the physical body and mind with that which is born of Spirit. Your human body has many automatic functions that you have little control over. If you become excessively hot, your body perspires. You cannot stop it from doing so. If you become extremely cold, your skin will get goose bumps. You did not will for them to be there, they just appear. If someone injures your body you automatically recoil away from the source of the harm. There are many automatic reflexes that your human body has which is hardly a result of your willing. One who is born of the Spirit is *in charge* of where it goes. The wind goes, unhampered, wherever it chooses to go. You can hear the sound of it, but it does not have a visible body. It is self-willed. Of course, we know that its environment causes it, but apart from that, for analogy sake, it could be said to make choices and decide for itself where it will blow and where it will not. Jesus describes those who are born of the Spirit as having these characteristics.

If one who is born of the Spirit resembles the wind, then that spirit person exercises a *will* and determines courses of action, speed of action, and duration of action. All of this is taking place in an area which cannot be seen. If you are born of the Spirit, you make decisions, and more decisions that determine your responses to the will of God, the speed of growth, and the duration of growth and tenacity.

Although other persons may see the fruits of your spiritual labors, they cannot see your Spirit man, or soul, they may only see the manifestations of its operations.

So far we have learned that one must be born again to be able to *see* and *enter* the kingdom of God. Also we have learned that one who is born again resembles the wind in the characteristic of choosing courses of action and reaction. It becomes necessary at this point to clarify what is meant by the expression *The kingdom of God*. Let's look at Jesus' statement:

Luke 17:20: And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:*

John 18:36: Jesus answered, *My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

We begin by noting 2 main things; 1) the kingdom of God is not visible and 2) the kingdom of God is not of this world. You can see that it is altogether a spiritual kingdom and is not in Jerusalem, or any other physical location. Now we know that it is invisible to the material eye. Now we will explore what it *is*. Apparently it is a *relationship*. Properly understood, the kingdom of God is the kingdom **OF GOD**. Let he who has ears to hear, hear.

From the Greek, the term *kingdom* simply means 'realm' or 'the realm in which God's will is fulfilled.' There is a difference between *God's kingdom* and the *kingdom OF GOD*. God's kingdom is something that belongs to Him and leaves the subject as simply that.....a subject. The kingdom OF GOD, however denotes a kingdom of those who are OF GOD, that are born by Him, sired by Him, and Sonshipped by him. Those who are in the kingdom of God are there, not as subjects to a king, but as children of a Heavenly Father.

Throughout his teaching career Jesus repeatedly taught his disciples to dwell on the relationship of God and child. In the Lord's prayer it begins with *Our Father*. Below are scriptures in which Jesus stresses the importance of entering the kingdom of God as a Child:

Matthew: 18:1-4 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

And said, Verily I say unto you, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Mark 10:14-15 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

From these scriptures we learn that one must be converted and become as a little child in order to enter the kingdom of God. This, of course would be a little child who has God as the Father. A child in these verses is pictured as being essentially innocent, unlearned, trusting, and depending upon the parent for sustenance. There is danger in learning a great deal about scripture and spiritual things as we get older. Although we would never say it out loud, we might think to ourselves “I know some stuff!” To some extent the more we learn, the less likely it is that anyone can teach us. The downfall of the Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus was their spiritual conceit. They imagined themselves to understand both scripture and God’s nature when in truth they understood neither. They lacked the humility that a child has, and were therefore not teachable. A little child, however, knows that he doesn’t know much of anything and is content to trust that the parent is in charge. The status of a child regarding himself as unknowing and trusting the parent is the classroom where the child and parent may interrelate. If ever the child becomes arrogant and untrusting, little learning can take place. We must be converted and become as little children, otherwise, we cannot enter into the realm or kingdom of God’s tutoring. We become that way as an act of our own will and we remain that way by ever agreeing with Paul who wrote:

1 Corinthians 8:1: Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*

1 Corinthians 8:2 *And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*

Thus far we have learned that in order to enter the kingdom of God we must be born again, and must be converted and become as little children. The spirit man is important, whereas the man born of woman is short lived. The verses below show that the flesh and blood man, born of woman does not inherit the kingdom of God:

1 Corinthians 15:48-54 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. 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, 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 shall be changed.* 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 15:42-44 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

Your human body is corruptible. This means that it is subject to aging, death, and decay. It was never designed to enter the kingdom of God because it is flesh and blood. These verses clearly state that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and the flesh and blood body doesn't inherit a state of incorruption either. Instead, the mortal soul is given a fresh start in a spiritual body. You will have lived this lifetime in a material body, but proceed from there in a spiritual body. Our concern, therefore should be twofold: We must be born again and become as little children to enter the kingdom of God.

What would be the characteristics of one who has been born again and become as a child in the kingdom of God? The verses below give examples:

1 John:3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

1 John:3:14 *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

1 John:3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 John:4:7-8 *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

1 John:4:12-13 No man hath seen God at any time. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

1 John:4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

1 John:5:18-19 *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself,* and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

Romans:8:13-16 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit*

itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

John 1:12-13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

From the verses above we see that when one's desire is to love the brethren, it is evidence that God lives in them and that they are functioning as a child of God. Furthermore, it declares that if you are led by the Spirit of God, you are a son of God. Once you have been born again, you are a child of God and that relationship overshadows and supplants any previous relationship you made have had.

Having become a child of God, we are given instructions by Jesus to love one another and also to go beyond that and become perfect as our parent God is perfect. For most, that is considered to be beyond accomplishment so they lay that verse aside. According to the dictionary, *perfect*, means whole, complete, and lacking nothing. Most are content to know that they have obtained immortality. Would you want an immortality while straddled with occasional sin thoughts and desires? That would be an eternal wrestling match. I believe that our heavenly Father wants us to become so indwelled with his love that it pushes out all that is less than himself just as light casts out darkness. Jesus prayed that we arrive as such a state:

John:14:20-21: At that day ye shall know *that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.* He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

John:17:14-17 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because *they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.* I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

If you have been born again, you were born OF GOD with God as your parent who sired you in your spirit man. This spirit man is your soul which will one day leave here in your spirit body. While still here you can help bring into reality that which Jesus also prayed on your behalf:

John:17:3 *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

John:17:20-23: Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; *that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;* and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and *hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

John:17:26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: *that the love wherewith thou hast loved me **may be in them,** and I in them.*

From the verses above we see that Jesus regarded knowing the true God and Himself with being eternal life. Of considerable importance in Jesus' prayers he prayed that we be at one with God as He was. He repeated it several times. It is in our interest to pray without ceasing that God so infuse and indwell our soul with His love that it could be said of us 'if you have seen me you have seen the Father, for my Father and I are one.' Incredible? Impossible? If is if you so appraise it. It appears that Jesus prayed for more than that the disciples quit quarreling and become likeminded. Jesus was praying for us to experience the same level of one-on-one relationship with God the Father that he had enjoyed. "*that the love wherewith thou hast love me may be in them, and I in them. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*".

The new birth is far far more than just a changed human attitude. It is actually the birth of a spiritual being designed to enjoy at-one-ment one with the parent.

1John:4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

A little reasoning here will go a long way. If God, who is pure, has someone dwelling inside Him who is less than pure, then God would no longer be pure. That is the way I reason. You may arrive at a different conclusion. It just seems to me that one would need to be of the same substance as God in our spirit to be *IN* Him. Otherwise it could be said that God has corruption in Him. You may protest, "You go too far with this. We should be content to be saved sinners simply permitted to be in Heaven." By way of reply I would have us briefly revisit part of the story of the prodigal son:

Luke:15:20-24 "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

The Father saw the prodigal son far off *and ran to him, fell on his neck, and kissed him.* We note the absence of judging. Instead we see the joy of the Father of seeing his lost son. The son started giving his little speech " Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." The son was unable to complete the speech which would have been, "make me as one of thy hired

servants.” The Father interrupted his dialogue saying; “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” Here we see total restoration without looking back. The Father did not order a robe; he ordered *the best robe*.

Apparently we need to make a quantum leap in our thinking in the way we regard ourselves. We will go so far as to call ourselves God’s children, but cling to our human identity fiercely. If God is your Father, then you are a child of God by definition. I would think that our goal would be to live up to our potential. Jesus stretched the potential enormously as he gave the following *commandment*:

Matthew:5:48 *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

This should be our goal. We should earnestly desire to be perfect even to the degree that our Heavenly Father is perfect. To be perfect is to be *whole, complete, and lacking nothing*. He said “...*as your Father which is in heaven...*”. In other words, we are to become like our Daddy. (Abba) We are not without resources as we see in the following verses:

James:1:4-5 But let patience have her perfect work, *that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, **and upbraideth not**; and it shall be given him.

1 John:4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because ***as he is, so are we in this world***.

We can use the following verse to guide us in our prayers:

Romans:5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because *the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*.

We should feel comfortable praying to the Father to send His Holy Spirit to shed abroad into our hearts God’s love. As born again children of God, this is our daily bread.

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