Feb 27 '65

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE **Bible** LESSON 16

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

What it means to be "BORN AGAIN"!

ON BUSY street corners and especially in evangelistic campaigns, you hear ministers ask, "Brother, have you been 'born again'? Just believe, and give the preacher your hand and the Lord your heart, and you'll be a 'born again' child of God."

But is that *all* there is to being "Born again"? True, YOUR BIBLE *DOES* TEACH THAT YOU MUST BE "BORN AGAIN," but it also teaches that there is much more that you must do before this happy event can happen to you than "just believe, and give the preacher your hand."

Neither do these ministers tell you *why* you need to be "born again"! LET'S UNDERSTAND this whole matter of "rebirth"!

WHY Be Born Again!

MAN WAS BORN WITHOUT THE VITAL ESSENCE THAT WILL ENABLE HIM TO LIVE FOREVER. Man is mortal. Man is a breathing, blood-circulating, temporarily existing material being. Man is subject to death. And this includes *you!*

Your time is fast running out, second by second. There is NO *ETERNAL* LIFE IN YOU as a result of your first birth. Your parents did not have immortality to give to you. You are exactly like any animal at death (Ecc. 3:19).

You were born a mortal flesh and blood being composed of matter, with probably some seventy years of existence.

What you NEED is to BE BORN AGAIN, this time AS AN IMMORTAL BEING composed of spirit, WITH SELF-CONTAINING ETERNAL LIFE in you, so you can't die.

Man Created Mortal

God formed OUR FIRST PARENTS, not out of Spirit, but "of the DUST of the ground." To the man whose creation is described in Genesis 1:26 and 2:7 God said, "DUST thou art." *Not* immortal spirit—just *dust*. Man is MORTAL, not yet immortal!

Adam was a perfect *physical* specimen, yes! Whatever God creates is perfect, not imperfect. But what God created, in Adam, was a *fleshly* man—a *mortal* man of flesh and blood! He was the PERFECT "CLAY MODEL" with which, BY NOW ADDING A SPIRITUAL INGREDIENT AND RESHAPING HIS CHARACTER, THE MASTER POTTER PURPOSES TO *CREATE* A REPRODUCTION OF HIS GLORIOUS SELF!

Adam, in other words, was not complete!

ONE vital THING was LACKING—and this one thing He was made to NEED—to hunger and to thirst for—the indwelling of God's *HOLY SPIRIT!*

WHY We Need the Holy Spirit

Notice: "But if any hath not Christ's Spirit [the Holy Spirit] he is none of His. And if Christ is *in* you"—living the same life *in* us now

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by the *Holy Spirit*, as *He* lived by the Holy Spirit while He was personally on earth—"your body is indeed dead"—i.e., dying—"because of sin; but the SPIRIT IS LIFE because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him"—the Father—"that raised Jesus from the dead *dwelleth in you*, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead shall make alive"—make immortal—"your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:10-11).

How plain. The Holy Spirit will, if *we* will receive it, IMPART the POWER TO COMMENCE ETERNAL LIFE.

We inherited mortal life through Adam. We become heirs of *eternal life*—heirs of God and the Kingdom of God—by being begotten through the *Holy Spirit*, which is the eternal *life* of God. "And the witness is this, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his *Son*"—*not* in an "immortal soul" we are *supposed* to possess. "Who hath the Son *hath* the *life;* who hath not the Son of God *hath not the life*. These things have I written you," says John, "that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (I John 5:11-12).

Eternal life with unending spiritual power is A *GIFT* OF GOD. It is an attribute of the Holy Spirit. "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life"—if we already had it, it would *not* be a gift; it would be inherited from our physical parents (Romans 6:23).

But the Holy Spirit does more than impart to us the possibility of eternal life. It IMPARTS to us the CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ALMIGHTY, the ALL-POWERFUL GOD the Father.

A Different Nature, Too

You also need a different *nature* so you will not continue to live eternally in sin, suffering and misery. The human nature which causes you to sin and brings upon you the death penalty must be replaced by a new and different nature—the DIVINE NATURE of God which cannot sin.

God the Father has PERFECT CHARACTER, perfect control over Himself. That is what you need, yet you weren't born with such powers. The only way to have them become a part of you is to have them *impregnated* in you by receiving within your mind the Spirit of God, which is the divine nature.

The only One who has both eternal life, and perfect character, is God. You NEED TO BE BORN OF GOD! How?

How Is Rebirth Possible?

About two thousand years ago NICODEMUS, a ruler of the Jews, was PUZZLED by this question like you probably are. JESUS had TOLD HIM, "EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, he CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (John 3:3).

Nicodemus understood the true meaning of the word "born," unlike most preachers today. But he still couldn't understand how it could be possible to be born once *again*, to have another life. "*How* can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be reborn?" he asked Jesus (verse 4).

Nicodemus knew only of a physical birth from physical parents. Therefore Jesus said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh *is flesh!*" Then He explained we must be born *again—NOT* AGAIN OF THE *FLESH—NOT* AGAIN BY ENTERING our MOTHER'S WOMB, as Nicodemus thought He meant—but be born of The Spirit—born of God! *God* must be our *Father* this time! As we were born of the flesh from a fleshly human father, so now we must be born of the Spirit by God, the heavenly Spiritual Father.

Here are *two different kinds of birth, one physical, the other spiritual.* When you were born of your *fleshly* parents you were *composed of flesh.* Your father and mother passed on to you a *fleshly nature* at birth. But, unlike that birth this one is a *second* birth, *not* a physical, fleshly one, BUT A *SPIRITUAL* BIRTH.

Just as a human being is flesh because he was born of fleshly parents, Jesus declared that anyone born again of *Spirit* is *composed of Spirit*—he *is spirit*, no longer flesh! "That which is born of the Spirit *is* spirit" and *not* flesh. There will be no blood in his body. He will not have to breathe air to exist. That's the plain teaching of the Bible!

The new birth is *not* an emotional experience but *A LITERAL BIRTH.* So you would not mistake the true meaning of being born of the Spirit, Jesus explained that as "the WIND bloweth where it listeth [where it wills], and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: SO IS EVERYONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT" (verse 8).

Notice what the Scripture says. *When you are "born from above," born of a heavenly* Father, *God, you will be INVISIBLE* like the wind which human eyes can't see. The work of the wind is easily discernible, but the wind itself cannot be seen. Also, if you were already born again, as the common teaching is, you would possess the *nature* of your heavenly Father—you would be composed of spirit because God *is* Spirit (John 4:24).

Jesus compared the physical birth to the Spiritual one. The former is a type of the latter. Human parents pass on a fleshly nature at birth to their children; so with our Heavenly Parent. God the FATHER IMPREGNATES or begets US with His Spirit AT CONVERSION when we desire, with all our heart, to turn from our old ways; He IMPARTS TO US HIS SPIRITUAL NATURE which must grow through a lifetime until it finally *composes* us *when we are born again.* WE MUST *GROW* SPIRITUALLY just as a foetus must *grow* physically before it can be born. If we don't grow, we become a "miscarriage" and are *not born* again.

Born Again at the Resurrection

Obviously all human beings who claim to be *born again,* now at this time, are deceived—they are *still* flesh and blood. The new birth is something yet to occur *at the resurrection.* Jesus said you must be born again, you must be composed of spirit in order to see or enter the Kingdom of God.

In speaking of the resurrection in I Corinthians 15:50 the apostle Paul says, "Now this I say, brethren, that *FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT the KINGDOM* of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption."

Note that Paul preached to the Corinthians the very same doctrine that Jesus at the first spoke to Nicodemus. You never can enter or inherit the Kingdom or Family of God unless you are born of God, composed of Spirit—it *does not decay.*

Paul tells in the next verses *when* the new birth of Christians will occur. "We shall all BE CHANGED"—no longer flesh and blood—"*AT THE LAST TRUMP:* for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." In verse 44 Paul says, "It is *sown a natural body*"—your first birth was natural, physical, fleshly, but WHEN YOU ARE *BORN AGAIN* "it is *RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY.*"

Notice it! Both Jesus and Paul speak of *physical and spiritual bodies.* Jesus tells *why* you will be composed of spirit—in being born again you have the spirit body of your parent; *like produces like.* If you are *born of* GOD, your Heavenly Father, *you will be Spirit*—because God is Spirit—you will be composed of the same substance of which He is composed.

Paul tells *when this change takes place* from flesh to spirit—*at the resurrection,* when you will be composed of spirit, *provided* that you have been *begotten* in this life *now* and provided you have *grown* sufficiently in grace and knowledge and godly character to be born of God.

Don't Be a Miscarriage!

Here is the TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCE OF BELIEVING that people are already "born again" because some preacher says so. Instead of *growing* as unborn babes *need to do* in order to come to birth, those who trust in a false new birth believe that there is NO NEED OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH NOW OR OBEDIENCE to the commandments because they think they are already "saved." When the resurrection comes such people will not be there! They have not grown or developed into the stature of Jesus' character by obeying the commandments of God.

Do you want to follow the broad way and perish, like a MISCARRIAGE of a foetus—a child that is conceived, but never born?

Or do you believe what Jesus said, that, once "converted," or begotten by the HOLY SPIRIT, that you need to *grow* by every word of God which CLEANS YOU UP SPIRITUALLY just as water cleans you physically (John 3:5; Eph. 5:26), so that you will finally be born of God and inherit the Kingdom?

"Born Again NOW" a False Teaching

Because Jesus made the new birth the essential to entering the kingdom of God, SATAN has his churches and his ministers preaching *COUNTERFEIT "new births"* to *deceive* the people, and to make the true way appear false (II Cor. 11:14, 15).

Masquerading as ministers of righteousness, they have *DELUDED MILLIONS* — not the few, but the millions—into accepting and appropriating Jesus Christ, shedding a few tears and believing in a superstitious "born again" experience.

Some make it a little more involved by working up an emotional ectasy which is interpreted to mean "regeneration," "sanctification," "baptism of the Holy Ghost," and a "new birth"!

Whatever the slight doctrinal differences, the devil has the CHURCHES *UNIVERSALLY DECEIVED* INTO BELIEVING that Christians are already "born again," that everything is all set. There are "*NO WORKS,*" as the saying goes. No need to obey God! There is no need, preach the false ministers, to obey God's commandments because you are already regenerated.

This is *Satan's clever method of beguiling the people into forgetting the real purpose* of the Christian life *and rejecting the only way to be born again.*

NOW let's UNDERSTAND what it really means to be born again—WHAT IT MEANS TO BECOME A *SON OF GOD*—what the Holy Spirit actually is—AND what THE CONDITIONS are for receiving the Holy Spirit.

Final Instructions

We are about ready for the actual lesson. But first, read this instruction!

Remember—you must OPEN your Bible TO EVERY PASSAGE. Never say to yourself, "Oh, I think I know what the Lesson is referring to" —and then pass over the Scripture. You need to "*keep your nose in the Bible,*" so to speak. You must READ AND RE-READ and STUDY EACH PASSAGE in your Bible. Don't forget, this is a *Bible Study* Course—not just a study of these words.

This lesson is intended to direct you to the Bible—to help you learn how you can better study the Bible. Here is the METHOD OF STUDY:

Have your BIBLE, a good DICTIONARY, a CONCORDANCE if you have one, and your STATIONERY, all placed in front of you on a desk or table. Now WRITE down neatly on your paper the SUBJECT OF THE LESSON and underscore it. Next write down the LESSON NUMBER. Then as you come to each QUESTION SECTION, write down its TITLE and underneath, NUMBER EACH QUESTION as you come to it. For each question WRITE DOWN THE ANSWER, together with any pertinent ideas that come to your mind.

READ THE LARGE TYPE WORDS in this Final Instructions section right down to the end of this section—*pay no attention to the small type.* And SUDDENLY—YOU HAVE A FLASH REVIEW OF ALL THE IMPORTANT POINTS! These serve as an INDEX, TOO. Simple and effective. All the material in the Lessons is written this way. *USE* THE LARGE WORDS THIS WAY *REGULARLY!*

LESSON 16

How to Receive the Holy Spirit

Since Jesus makes the PHYSICAL BIRTH a TYPE OF the SPIRITUAL, let's compare the similarities of these two *different* births which each one must experience in order to be saved.

Physically speaking, you became a child of your parents at the very instant of conception when a new physical life was begun. At that time you were conceived, or BEGOTTEN, but not yet BORN. But you were your parents' child just as much as Jacob and Esau were their parents' children *before* birth: "For the *children being not yet born . . .*" (Romans 9:11).

In the same manner, if you are a REAL CHRISTIAN, you are NOW A *BEGOTTEN* CHILD OR SON OF GOD. Upon conversion God the Father placed within you HIS SPIRIT, *the GERM* or *sperm,* so to speak, OF ETERNAL LIFE. *He begat you with the Holy Spirit just as the germ from a human father impregnates the egg of the mother.* YOU ARE LIKE AN EGG. You needed to be IMPREGNATED WITH the GERM OF ETERNAL LIFE. You needed to grow. You are *not yet born* of God—*not yet composed of Spirit—not yet immortal.*

As the unborn son or daughter is nourished and protected by its *mother* for a period of time at the end of which period it is born if it has grown properly, so it is the *function of the true Church* — the *mother* of us all — to feed true Christians with the pure Word of God. Thus you MUST BE *NOURISHED* as God's child on spiritual food — the words of Scripture — you must *live* by every word of God—you must *GROW* spiritually (II Peter 3:18)—UNTIL you are MATURE ENOUGH IN RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER TO BE *BORN* of God.

But HOW is it all POSSIBLE? How do we RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT which makes us the children of God and makes possible the beginning of eternal life for us? Understand.

1. Is REPENTANCE one of the requirements for receiving the Holy Spirit? Acts 2:38. What is repentance? Notice II Corinthians 7:9-10 for the answer.

COMMENT: In Acts 2:38, baptism is mentioned as part of the prior condition to receiving the gift of eternal life from God. The entire subject of water baptism will be presented in two future lessons. In the meantime you should write for our free booklet "All About Water Baptism."

2. Is the HOLY SPIRIT A GIFT FROM GOD—or is it something with which we were born by nature? Compare Luke 11:13 with Acts 10:45.

3. Then the Holy Spirit is *NOT* SOMETHING WE HAVE—*not* something with which we were born, is it? Acts 11:17.

4. Are we to ASK GOD TO GRANT us the Holy Spirit? Luke 11:13 again.

5. How can we know that GOD *HEARS* US WHEN we ask Him for His Holy Spirit? I John 3:22. Doesn't KEEPING the COMMAND-

MENTS and doing the things that please God satisfy His requirements? Same verse.

COMMENT: We must have *repented* of having lived by our *own* ways—our own standards or laws—and now have made a complete change of direction. Now we must be so desirous of pleasing God that we are keeping *His commandments* as much as we are *humanly* able to do with our weak carnal fleshly minds. *Then* it is that, when we cry to God to be begotten of Him (as our spiritual Heavenly Father) with the *power* which will enable us to truly keep His commands in their highest *spiritual* sense, He will *hear* us and will impregnate us—the egg—with His very Spirit which will begin gradually to change us until finally we can keep *God's* commands perfectly when *born* of God at the resurrection!

6. Does Acts 5:32 also verify the fact that OBEDIENCE is one of the conditions to receiving the Holy Spirit—one of the conditions to receiving the gift of eternal life? Acts 5:32.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit is a FREELY OFFERED *GIFT* from God. It is *NOT anything we can EARN*. There is nothing you can do which will force God to give you the Holy Spirit. Rather, God offers to give you freely of His Spirit if you become willing to BELIEVE IN HIS SON Jesus Christ and become willing to DO WHAT HE COMMANDS you. These are prior conditions, but they *do not* earn you eternal life.

7. What is the love of God which we must have as a prior condition? I John 5:3.

8. Are we to believe in Jesus Christ and to LOVE ONE ANOTHER as a condition to receiving answers to our prayers for the Holy Spirit? I John 3:22, 23. Notice especially verse 23.

A Counterfeit Spirit Preached

Most people are totally unaware of Paul's *warning* that there would be many FALSE CHURCHES PREACHING *DIFFERENT* DOCTRINES ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT—*deceiving the many* into accepting a *different* spirit from the one, true Holy Spirit revealed in Scripture, which *alone* will beget us to eternal life!

Notice: "But I fear"—Paul was sorrowed, he knew what was coming in our day—"lest somehow, as the SERPENT beguiled Eve in his craftiness, *your* thoughts should be CORRUPTED from THE *SIMPLICITY* and the purity that is toward the Christ"—CHRIST'S DOCTRINE IS *SIMPLE*, when we understand it—it is not a theological mystery!

Continuing with II Cor. 11:3-4: "For if he who cometh"—any false minister coming in the name of Christ, "preacheth *another* Jesus"—the world is filled with the preaching of a *different* Jesus who was born, who died and rose at a different time than the true Messiah, a different Jesus who rejected the Father's immutable laws—"whom we did not preach"—says Paul—"or ye receive a different spirit, which ye did not receive"—from the preaching of the apostles—"ye bear well with him," or accept or are *deceived* by him.

That is what has happened today. PAUL WARNED ABOUT receiving A "DIFFERENT SPIRIT" and "A DIFFERENT GOSPEL."

This prophetic warning from Paul has already been fulfilled! The world has accepted a *different* spirit—*the spirit of error*, not the spirit of truth.

1. How can we KNOW that WE HAVE RECEIVED the TRUE SPIRIT OF GOD and not some counterfeit spirit from the devil? Notice the principle recorded in Matthew 7:20. We can *know* which ministers are preaching about the Spirit of God *BY THE FRUITS* of the Spirit IN their LIVES, can't we?

2. What is the *fruit* of the *true* Spirit of God? Galatians 5:22.

3. What is the first one of the fruits listed—the most important fruit? Is it LOVE? Same verse.

4. Is the love of God one of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit? Romans 5:5. Isn't it clear that a person does not have the love of God if he does not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in him?

5. What is the LOVE OF GOD? Rom. 13:10. Is not this the same teaching we discovered in I John 3:22-23? This has been God's message from the beginning, hasn't it? I John 3:11-12.

COMMENT: Before one can receive the Holy Spirit, he must have the attitude of obedience. He must become willing to do God's will—God's commandments. *But it is not until he has received the HOLY SPIRIT that he obtains THE FULL POWER TO PERFORM GOD'S LAW.* The Holy Spirit is the *power* of God manifest in our lives—Romans 15:13.

The OTHER FRUITS of the Spirit, mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5:22 amplify the attitude of love. OBEDIENCE to God is not harsh and cruel and unyielding—it is A JOY, it is PEACEABLE and GENTLE, it expresses itself in SELF-CONTROL. Self-control is the key to real spiritual power. Most people cannot be filled with spiritual power because they have not been willing to exercise self-control. Uncontrolled power is worse than no power at all.

You have probably been taught that you cannot receive the Holy Spirit until you work up your emotions or until you reject God's law. That deceptive teaching results from hearing a *perverted* gospel—a *different* gospel than Jesus preached.

Begotten Now—Not Yet Born of God

The HOLY SPIRIT, which a person may receive if he asks God for it, in conformity to His will, *may be compared to* the *germ* or *sperm* of physical life. *It TRANSMITS GOD'S MENTAL POWERS and SPIRITUAL ATTRIBUTES TO US.* It is His LOVE. It is HIS DIVINE *NATURE.* It is His immortal LIFE.

First, notice that the Holy Spirit—the germ by which we are begotten—comes from the Father. God has masculine characteristics. That is *why* WE CALL HIM "FATHER." WE are called THE *BEGOTTEN* CHILDREN of God (I John 3:1). God, then, has the power to *beget* us as His children. *He BEGETS us "BY HIS SPIRIT."* The Spirit by which we are begotten is termed in the Bible a *germ* OR "SEED." Peter tells us we are "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through God's word, which liveth and abideth" (I Peter 1:23). Jesus completes this by saying we must *finally be born again*—at the resurrection—when we shall be spirit. Now we are *only flesh* with the spiritual germ of eternal life *empowering* us.

Now consider the full scriptural *PROOF* that we are only the *begotten* children of God, not yet born of Him.

1. Are we already called the "sons of God"? Compare Romans 8:14 with I John 3:1.

2. Does being a son of God mean that we are already *born* of God, *or* are WE *ONLY BEGOTTEN* OF HIM NOW? I Peter 1:23.

3. If we are the children of God, are WE inheritors of the KINGDOM OF GOD, or only HEIRS to it? Romans 8:17.

COMMENT: Notice that although we are now the sons of God we are still *heirs.* Why? *Because we are only begotten* children. We shall be *INHERITORS WHEN BORN* of God at the resurrection, when we shall be composed of spirit.

Whatever is born of spirit IS *spirit,* said Jesus. We are not yet born of spirit. We are *STILL FLESH AND BLOOD!* We are therefore only heirs to the kingdom of God—I Cor. 15:50.

COMMENT: *One* Greek word means *both "begotten" and "born."* The translators unfortunately, at times, selected the wrong one of these two words when translating a Bible sentence, so that the English word "born" may appear where "begotten" is intended, and vice versa.

4. When do we become incorruptible spirit and no longer flesh? I Cor. 15:42? Has the RESURRECTION of the dead occurred yet? Then we are *NOT* YET born into the Kingdom of God as inheritors, are we?

We are only the begotten children of God!

5. Are we *already* like Christ is in appearance and in composition? I John 3:1-2. When *will* we be like Him?—when He appears to raise the dead? Same verse. We are *(begotten)* sons now.

COMMENT: We are begotten of God, impregnated by the Holy Spirit from the Father, which is the beginning of eternal life. But we are not yet born of Him, for it has not yet appeared what we shall be like. WE DO *NOT* LOOK LIKE CHRIST NOW. Note the point that John emphasizes. WE SHALL BE like Him, *COMPOSED* OF SPIRIT—"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"—"when He shall appear"—at the resurrection when Christ returns to raise the dead.

Then we shall see Jesus as He really is. Christ told Nicodemus that in order to see the Kingdom or Family of God, in which He—Christ—now is, we must be born again. How consistent the teaching of the Bible is!

When we are born again, composed of spirit, we shall be able to *see* spirit—we shall *behold* Jesus Christ as He *actually* appears. But the people of the world, who will still be composed of *flesh* and can't see spirit, will see Christ only as He *physically* manifests Himself in glorious form at His return.

We Receive "Spirit of Sonship"

1. Is GOD CALLED THE *"FATHER* OF *SPIRITS"?* Heb. 12:9. Then does this not clearly prove that WE can be FINALLY literally *born* of God?—BE BORN AS HIS *SPIRIT-COMPOSED CHILDREN?*

2. Is CHRIST called THE "FIRSTBORN OF *MANY BRETHREN"?* Rom. 8:29. If He is the *first* Son *born* into the God-Kingdom, then there *must be other sons* also *to be born* into it, aren't there?

Does not this same verse clearly explain that WE are TO BE like Christ—"CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON"—that we are TO BE HIS BRETHREN?

COMMENT: *Prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,* He was the *only* begotten Son of the Father, *but since that time we also may be begotten of the Father.*

3. Is *JESUS Christ* declared to be *THE FIRSTBORN* from the dead? Col. 1:18. If He is the *first*born from the dead, then are not the OTHERS who are to be raised from the dead also TO BE BORN INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD as Jesus has been? How else could He be the *first*born?

4. Are Christians called the *CHILDREN* OF GOD? Gal. 3:26.

5. Now compare Galatians 3:26 with Romans 8:14-17 and Ephesians 1:5. Do these verses reveal the *same truth*—that we are to be born again in order to inherit eternal life?

COMMENT: In some versions of the Bible the expression "adoption of sons" or "adoption of children" is used. This is not a proper transla-

tion. The original inspired Greek expression *huiothesia* means sonship. WE RECEIVE THE "SPIRIT OF *SONSHIP*," not the "spirit of *adoption*." The Holy Spirit makes us *literal sons of God. We are going to be like our heavenly Father.*

6. What is the NAME which all truly BEGOTTEN CHILDREN of God BEAR as a result of receiving the Holy Spirit from the Father? Ephesians 3:15.

COMMENT: The name which all converts bear as a result of being begotten by the Holy Spirit is God.

We are called the "SONS OF GOD" or God's-sons"—just as human beings bear the names John*son*, Robert*son*, and Jack*son*, meaning originally the sons of John, Robert and of Jack. GOD is the *FAMILY NAME* of the divine Kingdom. It is the Father "from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named" (Eph. 3:15).

The Father's name is "God" in English.

Jesus is called God in John 1:1 and in other texts. He is not angelic spirit, but divine or *God* Spirit.

God is a *GROWING* FAMILY OR KINGDOM into which we may enter. God is a Family, a Kingdom, NOT a TRINITY. The Father in Heaven wants *you* to become a member of His divine Family. You can be His Son if you surrender your whole life to Him—believe all that is in the Bible—believe Christ is your Saviour and obey Him—and be filled with the power of the Spirit of God.

SPIRITUAL THINGS seem unreal to most people. And no wonder! Spiritual qualities are invisible, not discerned by the senses until REVEALED in writing in the Bible!

When we speak of the Holy Spirit, many cannot grasp its nature. Yet the Bible makes clear the nature of spirit.

Notice, "God is spirit" (John 4:24). The GOD-FAMILY is COMPOSED OF SPIRIT. The Father and the Son, who are already composed of spirit, have DEFINITE *SHAPE*. From one end of the Bible to the other we are told about the *shape* and the parts of each member in the God-family. The Father and the Son each have a HEAD, hair, eyes, NOSE, mouth, arms, fingers, a torso, LEGS, feet, plus INWARD PARTS. So has man. Man is in the *image* of God. But man is born only of flesh. MAN is MATTER, but GOD is SPIRIT. (Review the Lesson entitled "What Is Man?" You will now learn things you didn't see in that Lesson before!)

Even though the Father and the Son are spirit and are in DEFINITE LOCATIONS with respect to each other, the SPIRIT PROCEEDS FROM them into the entire universe much like air fills everything on earth! Note David's words that God's Spirit PERMEATES *everything*. Psalms 139:7-11.

The divine Spirit that fills the entire universe is the channel by which the Father and the Son *create. Man has no such attribute or power born into him.* But man may *form tools* and mechanical brains to make things.

MAN IS PUT HERE on earth TO LEARN to develop tools for limited CREATIVE WORK—to train himself for the eternal goal—becoming part of the *God-family*, which means *sharing* control of the creative Spirit of God.

That is what it means to become born again—to be fully imbued with God's power by receiving the Holy Spirit.

What It Means to Be Born of God

ONLY WHEN ONE IS *BORN* OF GOD by a resurrection DOES A PERSON BECOME *PERFECT* (I John 3:9-10). Christ is the only human being thus far *born* of God. He is *perfect.*

Of course! If we are God's children, WE are TO *"GROW UP"* TO BECOME LIKE HIM.

Now we come to another wonderful truth.

The Eternal God has created innumerable universes, galaxies and worlds. The full extent of His entire finished creation is completely beyond the grasp of the human mind—completely beyond the telescope or the microscope.

But wonder of wonders!—*GOD IS STILL CREATING before our very eyes HIS HIGHEST AND NOBLEST WORK*—HE IS FASHIONING BEGOTTEN SONS TO BE BORN INTO HIS OWN FAMILY! You and I have the opportunity of becoming a son in the Family or Kingdom of God!

By a process completely hidden to the world, and revealed only to His own children by the Bible, God is now begetting, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, sons *after His own kind*—after His own character and likeness. The begettal, nourishment and actual birth of sons into the God Kingdom by a resurrection to divine and glorified immortality is *the supreme pinnacle of creation!* GOD THE CREATOR'S SUPREME ACHIEVEMENT!

Yet most churches do not realize this wonderful truth. They talk about being born of God, but they *don't know what it means!*

1. Christians are not only to have the NATURE OF GOD—to be composed of spirit—but are we also to have the very MIND OF GOD? Phil. 2:5. Did Jesus Christ have that mind in Him when He walked on earth? Same verse.

2. Is man naturally born with the mind of God? Rom. 8:6-7. Is the mind of man naturally subject to the laws of God?

3. What is the natural mind of man like? Mark 7:21-22 and Matthew 15:19.

4. Are we commanded to surrender our natural, carnal minds to God? Gal. 5:16-17. Are we to yield our minds to the influence of the Spirit of God? Same verse.

5. Are the LAWS OF GOD TO BE INGRAINED IN OUR MINDS if we are Christians? Heb. 8:8-11. Isn't it clear that one of the final characteristics of Christians who are now begotten and finally will be born of God is that they will have become like God in character—perfect—unable to sin? Note especially verse 10.

One Other Point

It has been the favorite teaching of some that Christians can't sin anymore in this life because they are "born again." This doctrine originated from misapplying I 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." Notice what this means.

1. Can Christians commit sin? I John 1:8. Who is doing the speaking in this verse—the apostle John? And is he using the present tense of the verb? Then the apostle plainly means that CHRISTIANS NOW CAN, and sometimes do commit SIN, doesn't he? Notice that he includes *himself*—"*we*."

2. Was the apostle Paul beset with recurring sin long *after* he repented and received the Holy Spirit? Rom. 7:14-25.

3. Does Jesus admonish us to overcome sin continually? Rev. 2:26.

4. Is there a just man on earth who does not at some time commit sin? Ecclesiastes 7:20. Therefore Christians are *NOT* NOW *BORN* OF GOD in this mortal flesh, are they?

5. Now notice I John 5:18. What does this scripture reveal?

COMMENT: Notice the difference between the two conditions referred to in this verse. The one *can't* sin because God's seed remaineth in him. He is *born* of God and has God's nature, *not* the human nature that once caused him to sin if he didn't have the strength to resist. The other, who is *begotten*, must keep himself from being spotted—he must continue to *resist* the deceptions and the pollutions of the world. Such a one *can* commit sin. *He will not willfully sin—but WHEN CAUGHT OFF GUARD OR IN A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS—he CAN SIN.* Life is to the begotten child still a *constant struggle* against the wiles of the devil operating in the world and through his own human nature. Although he has now received *the divine nature* (II Pet. 1:4) he still has *human nature*, and the one wars against the other. The Christian must keep his human nature "nailed to the cross"—and *will* to be *led by* the Spirit or nature of God. (Ephesians 3:20; Romans 8:14.)

Much of the confusion about being born again has resulted from misinterpreting the original Greek.

In the English language we have two different verbs—*to beget* and *to be born*—which are used to translate the *one* Greek word *gennao*. This Greek word means "to conceive," or "to beget," and also "to bear," or "to be born." In order to know which meaning is intended, we must let the Bible interpret the Bible. Since the Bible plainly reveals that Christians *can* sin now—in this flesh-and-blood mortal existence—we therefore *know* that it is ONLY WHEN ONE IS ACTUALLY *BORN* OF GOD *in the future*, at the resurrection, that he *CANNOT* SIN ANY MORE.

SUMMARY

In summary, the HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD IS this: It is the very spirit—THE VERY *LIFE*, THE VERY *ESSENCE* OF GOD THE CREATOR! God, according to John 4:24, is a Spirit, but man is mortal. Man is flesh. God is composed of Spirit. Spirit is not like matter. Man is composed of matter. Matter occupies a definite amount of physical space, and has weight. But God's Spirit EMANATES FROM HIM, like the air. It is force. IT IS POWER, it is LIFE, it is CHARACTER!

When God's Spirit emanating from the very person of God enters into a man, it IMPREGNATES that man WITH the VERY LIFE OF GOD—it plants within that man or woman the divine nature of God, to develop the very character of God, until we, through His Spirit, BECOME LIKE GOD—until we THINK AS GOD THINKS—until we see things with the same attitude as God sees them, and we act as God acts—yes, until WE *BECOME* GOD, even as Christ is now *very* God—*born* MEMBERS OF THE GOD FAMILY WHICH *IS* THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

What *WONDERFUL NEWS!* What meaning there is to being "born again"!

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