

Are You Ready to Be BORN AGAIN?

God's Holy Days picture God's plan of salvation. For every human, salvation means being literally born again, into God's Family!

By Thomas Damour

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:3, 6).

So said Jesus Christ. He was explaining to the Pharisee Nicodemus the process through which every human must go to fulfill the purpose of life.

But Nicodemus didn't understand. And neither do millions of sincere professing Christians today who have been led to believe, incorrectly, that they already have been born again!

Jesus was comparing the ultimate spiritual birth into God's Family and Kingdom to the physical birth of an infant. Just as a physical embryo must develop and mature before birth can take place, so, too, the spiritually begotten son of God must mature before spiritual birth into God's very Family can take place.

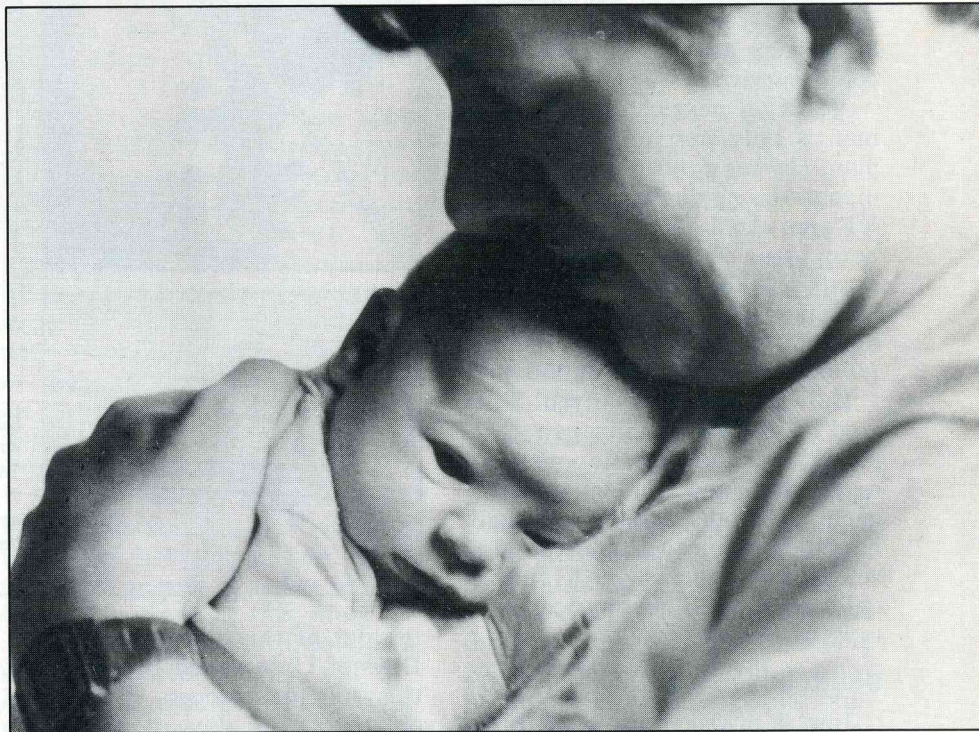
Our free booklet *Just What Do You Mean — Born Again?* makes this whole subject clear. Write for it and see for yourself. Don't judge before you've examined all the facts!

The human reproductive pro-

cess pictures the process of spiritual salvation, which is actually God the Father reproducing Himself. Likewise, God's Holy Days show God's plan for saving mankind. But those Holy Days

ning of the next monthly menstrual cycle in a woman's body. According to many authorities the egg must be fertilized during a critical 24-hour period.

Now the size of the period at



are understood and kept by infinitesimally few people. Let's examine this comparison between physical and spiritual birth.

How a baby develops

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ning of the next monthly menstrual cycle in a woman's body. According to many authorities the egg must be fertilized during a critical 24-hour period.

Now the size of the period at

tion our tiny friend — a living human — has a discernible heart-beat, arms, legs and a liver that is producing blood. The face of the embryo begins to round out, and a tiny neck becomes visible. This minute replica of humanity is, for the first time, recognizable as a human.

No longer called an embryo but a fetus (Latin for “offspring”), what remains is a perfecting of details.

By the first day of the seventh month the hearing mechanism of the fetus is fully developed. Loud noises from outside the womb can be heard and responded to.

Before the 10th day of the seventh month, oxygen is supplied to the fetus through the mother’s bloodstream. After this time, however, the blood of the fetus changes to allow the circulation of oxygen to occur independently of the mother.

By the 15th day of the seventh month, the lungs of the fetus are completely developed. Should birth occur at this point, the child could survive.

Yet the physical creation of man is only part of God’s great plan. He has determined that humans will one day become part of His spiritual Family, literally born again as immortal, spirit-composed God-beings in God’s universe-ruling Kingdom. (Write for our free book *The Incredible Human Potential* for details.)

But before this birth into God’s spiritual Family can take place, spiritual development is necessary. Now understand the cycle of God’s Holy Days and how they picture the spiritual development process in a future child of God. The physical is a type of the spiritual.

Spiritual growth

Just as physical life is begotten on or about the 14th day before the next menstrual cycle, God’s first festival occurs on the 14th day of the first month of God’s sacred calendar. This day is called the Passover (Leviticus 23:5).

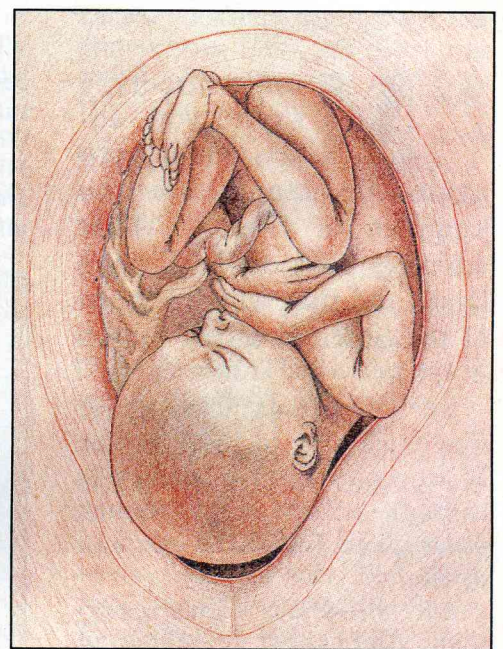
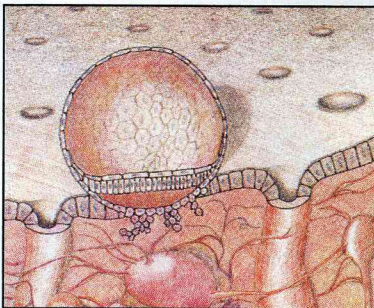
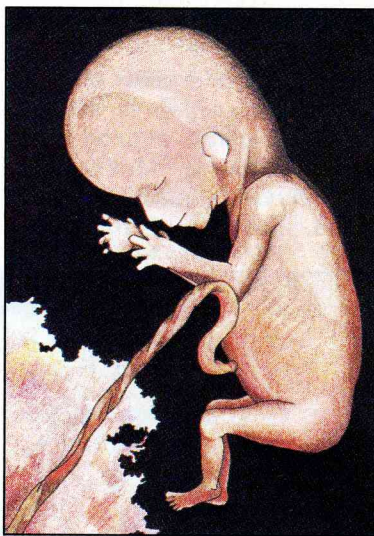
(We will send you, free for the asking, a copy of God’s sacred

calendar, showing God’s Holy Days.)

Jesus Christ is our Passover (I Corinthians 5:7). Without His shed blood to pay the death penalty for our sins in our stead, we could never begin our spiritual development.

After fertilization, the egg journeys from the Fallopian tube to the uterus. This journey usually begins on the 15th day of the first month and takes up to seven days to complete.

A spiritually begotten son of God must not stagnate after being begotten. He must begin a journey that will end in his com-



Human reproduction pictures the process of spiritual salvation — being born again, into God’s Family. Clockwise from left, fertilized ovum in uterine wall; after 50 days fetus is recognizable as a human; at 7 months, fetus has sufficiently developed lungs to live at birth. The physical is a type of the spiritual.

ing out of this sinful world. The Days of Unleavened Bread typify this spiritual process. Beginning on the 15th day of the first month and lasting seven days, the Days of Unleavened Bread picture the putting away of sin and coming out of this world (Leviticus 23:6-8). If this journey is not made successfully, a spiritual miscarriage will result.

The next Holy Day on God’s calendar is Pentecost (verses 15-

16). *Pentecost* means “count 50.” After 50 days, a new physical life is no longer called an embryo but a fetus, or “offspring.” It becomes, for the first time, recognizable as a human being. What remains in its development is a perfecting of details.

On the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, the day the New Testament Church of God began, those who received the Holy Spirit became, for the first time, recognizable sons of God. From that day on they began to display the spiritual characteristics of God their Father (Galatians 5:22-23). Likewise, upon his or her

conversion and receiving the Holy Spirit now, the true Christian is begotten as a child of God the Father and begins to develop the Father’s nature.

But spiritual growth does not come overnight. Godly character takes time to develop. Although a Christian may have the germ of eternal life present in his mind through the Holy Spirit, time is needed for the perfecting of detail. God’s Church nurtures the

spiritual growth of those few "firstfruits" with whom God is working in this age (Ephesians 4:11-15).

During the final months of pregnancy the fetus will grow from about 12 inches to about 20 inches and will increase in weight from little more than a pound to about seven-and-a-half pounds.

By the seventh month, the ears of the fetus have completed development. The fetus can discern sounds outside the womb and respond to them.

In Leviticus 23:24 we see that the next Holy Day is called the Feast of Trumpets. In ancient Israel, trumpets were blown to warn of impending battle. Those who heard the warning were prepared to defend themselves, while those who ignored it perished.

The spiritually mature Christian must also have the ability to discern truth from error or perish. But it is not enough to just hear the truth. One must respond: "For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Romans 2:13).

The Feast of Trumpets pictures the return of Jesus Christ to this earth as a conquering king, to put down all opposition to His authority and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth (Revelation 19:11-16).

On the 10th day of the seventh month, the blood of the fetus changes to allow the circulation of oxygen independently of the mother. This is an absolute necessity if the newborn child is to survive after birth.

Likewise, the spiritually begotten fetus is protected from spiritual death by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Christ's sacrifice paid the penalty of eternal death in our stead. The death of Christ was necessary if man was ever going to have the opportunity to be truly born again.

It was also on the 10th day of the seventh month, called the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27), that the high priest in ancient Israel sacrificed a goat (Leviticus 16:15-16). This sacrifice, performed once a year on

the Day of Atonement, pictured a future event — namely the risen Christ figuratively taking His blood to the mercy seat at the very throne of God (Hebrews 9:24, 26, 28).

The Day of Atonement also pictures the binding of Satan, the ultimate cause of every evil in the world (Revelation 20:1-3). Satan will be restrained for a thousand years during which the earth will finally know peace. The world will finally be *at one* with God.

The Feast of Tabernacles

Jesus Christ has promised to return to this planet (Acts 1:11). Few have understood why, because they have not understood the meaning of the next Holy Day on God's calendar.

On the 15th day of the seventh month begins a seven-day feast called the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34-36). This Feast of Tabernacles, which this issue of *The Good News* focuses on, pictures the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on earth in the Kingdom of God.

The spiritually begotten sons of God will no longer live in temporal physical bodies, or tabernacles, but will be born again with bodies composed of spirit: "As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:48, 53).

By the 15th day of the seventh month, remember, the lungs of the fetus have developed sufficiently to permit it to live should birth take place at this time.

Being "born again" into God's spirit-composed Family will occur, for the true members of the Church of God, at Jesus Christ's return.

How few understand what it really means to be born again!

What about the rest of humanity?

But what about those who have not had an opportunity to understand God's truth? Through the

centuries billions of people have lived out their lives in ignorance of God's way of life. What is their fate?

There remains one more Holy Day in God's plan for mankind. It is called the Last Great Day. It takes place the day after the Feast of Tabernacles ends (Leviticus 23:39).

The Last Great Day pictures the time, after the Millennium, when this vast sea of humanity will have an opportunity, their first, to obey God and develop God's character. They will no longer live contrary to God's way, but humbly live in accordance with it. Their hearts will be changed.

These billions will then have their first opportunity for salvation — their first chance to be born again:

"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened [the Bible]. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books" (Revelation 20:12).

The loving God wants all these people in His Family, just as He wants those with whom He is working now. The Last Great Day pictures the time when they will have their chance.

The great purpose for your life

God has a great purpose for your life. That purpose is revealed to us through the Holy Days, and the process of physical birth pictures the process of spiritual birth into God's Family.

The designer of the physical fetus is now molding and shaping true Christians, who will one day become His literal spiritual children. They will be born again as immortal spirit beings with the very character of God!

Surely we can say, as David did: "For You have formed my inward parts; You have covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13-14). □

Illustrations by Dan Dowd