

The New Birth

Thoughts about how the new birth happens

By Leon King

[Note: I wrote this article during the 1990's while I was still learning about the New Birth. My studies led me very near the whole truth, but like Apollos, I needed someone to expound the scriptures to me more perfectly. In the years since the article was written, I have come to realize the truth (more perfectly) of Jesus' statement to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Most preachers in the churches where I grew up believed that God must do a work in a person's life before he could see the truth of the gospel. These men would use the terms "enable, help, etc." These terms, used by sincere, godly, well-meaning preachers, fell short of the truth. I came to see the Scriptures taught that a man was quickened. That means that he was made alive - who was before dead in trespasses and in sins. The Holy Ghost working in a manner, like the wind, brought him to life. After that quickening, the sinner could see and enter into the kingdom. When the gospel was preached to him, both life and immortality was brought to life and he heard it gladly with a thankful heart. With this explanatory note, I leave the article intact, just as it was written. No doubt, there are many other things to learn along the way. We are all learners. - Leon King, October 29, 2007]

This preacher was born the first time on July 15, 1935. At the time, I didn't know anything about how I was born; I just knew that I was alive. I wanted food and attention, which were good indicators that I was alive. Later in life, I learned how I was born the first time. I was born the second time in July, 1946. What does that mean? Well, I was quickened (made alive) or regenerated. I became a believer in Jesus Christ as my savior because I believed the gospel. At the time, I didn't know anything

about how I was born again. I simply knew that I believed. Just as with the first birth, later on, I learned more about how I was born the second time.

In John, chapter three, the Scripture records a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. In this conversation, the Lord told Nicodemus that a man *must* be born again in order to see or to enter into the kingdom of God. He did not tell Nicodemus *how* to be born again, but he did say that in order to see or enter into the kingdom, one must be born again.

In the verses that follow this, the Lord shows God's purpose and promise to those who believe in His only begotten Son. Notice: "*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. 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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. **He that believeth on him** is not condemned: but **he that believeth not** is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*" -- John 3:14-18.

I have highlighted some of the words in this passage. The highlighted portions are the subjects of the clauses in which they appear. These are statements. They are not propositions. Whosoever has believed and continues to believe will not perish. Whosoever has believed and continues to believe has eternal life and will not be condemned. True believers have experienced the New Birth. They have passed from death unto life. Let us notice some things about the New Birth.

All men are sinners and are dead in their sins until they are born again. The Scriptures tell us that Adam died the day he sinned against

God. He did not die that day in a physical sense because we are old that he lived nine hundred and thirty years then died physically.

*"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." -- Genesis 2:16-17. "And all the **days** that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." -- Genesis 5:5. Adam died spiritually the day he ate of the forbidden fruit. Later, he died physically.*

Adam's act of disobedience passed the sin nature and death on us all, since we all came from Adam and Eve. *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." -- Romans 5:12-14. Since every person is born in total hereditary depravity, he will choose to commit sin. He *can* do nothing else for he is a corrupt tree. A corrupt tree *cannot* bring forth good fruit.*

All men are born dead spiritually and must be born again (born from above) by an act of God in order to see and enter into the kingdom of God. The Bible teaches those of us who are now alive in Christ were once "*dead in sins*" so that fact is not open to debate. Notice:

*"(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, <even> God, who **quickeneth the***

dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”
-- Romans 4:17.

“Neither yield ye your members <as> instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are **alive from the dead**, and your members <as> instruments of righteousness unto God.” -- Romans 6:13.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that **being dead wherein we were held**; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not <in> the oldness of the letter.” -- Romans 7:6.

“And you <hath he quickened>, **who were dead in trespasses and sins**: ” -- Ephesians 2:1.

“Even when **we were dead in sins**, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” -- Ephesians 2:5.

Make no mistake about it. We were born into this world spiritually dead. We were both unable and unwilling to hear the gospel and come to Christ. Dead men are neither able nor willing to do anything. It was necessary that we be sought after and saved. That is what Jesus Christ did. Jesus Christ bore all our sins in His own body on the tree, was buried, and was raised again according to the Scripture. The message of his death, burial, and resurrection for us is the gospel - the power of God unto salvation for those who are believing. Let us now notice several points concerning the salvation and the new birth.

A. MEN WILL NOT AND CANNOT COME ON THEIR OWN.

*"And ye **will not** come to me, that ye might have life."* -- John 5:40.

*"No man **can** come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."* -- John 6:44.

We see from these two passages that the scripture teaches that men are both unwilling and unable to come except when drawn by the Father. The term "will not" denotes volition or exercise of the person's will. The term "can" denotes ability.

B. MAN'S SPIRIT MUST BE MADE OPERABLE OR HE CANNOT UNDERSTAND SPIRITUAL THINGS.

*"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither **can he know <them>**, because they are spiritually discerned."* -- 1 Corinthians 2:14.

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Notice that the term "can" is again seen in this passage. The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. This speaks of his ability to do so. We are left with the fact that God must bestow the new birth on the person so that he can receive the things of the Spirit of God.

C. MEN ARE DISCIPLINED BY PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

*"And this **gospel of the kingdom** shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."* -- Matthew 24:14.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, <even> unto the end of the world. Amen ." -- Matthew 28:18-20.

*"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, **Preaching the kingdom of God**, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." -- Acts 28:30-31.*

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D. THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION.

*"For I am not ashamed of the **gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;** to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith.*" -- Romans 1:16-17.*

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E. THE NEW BIRTH IS A WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST.

*"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, **by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;** Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our*

Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” -- Titus 3:4-7.

F. MEN ARE CALLED AND BROUGHT FORTH BY THE GOSPEL WHICH IS CALLED THE INCORRUPTIBLE SEED.

*“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: **Whereunto he called you by our gospel,** to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” -- 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.*

*“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, <see that ye> love one another with a pure heart fervently: **Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.** For all flesh <is> as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. **And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.**” -- 1 Peter 1:22-25.*

G. MEN ARE SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH - CREATED NEW IN CHRIST JESUS.

*“For **by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: <it is> the gift of God:** Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ*

Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” -- Ephesians 2:8-10.

H. GOD’S CHILDREN (THOSE WHO BELIEVE) ARE BEGOTTEN OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER.

*“Of his own will **begat he us with the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” -- James 1:18.*

*“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 3:9.*

*“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that **is begotten of him**.” -- 1 John 5:1.*

*“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.” -- 1 John 5:18.*

I. MAN’S WILL IS NOT INVOLVED IN THE NEW BIRTH.

*“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.” -- John 1:12-13.*

“What shall we say then? <Is there> unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I

*will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. **So then <it is> not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.*** --

Romans 9:14-16.

J. THE WAY OF THE NEW BIRTH IS ILLUSTRATED IN MAN'S NATURAL BIRTH AND IN THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

"And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock <are they>, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of <this> life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an

honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep <it>, and bring forth fruit with patience.” -- Luke 8:4-15.

This parable is also found in Matthew 13:1-13 and Mark 4:1-20. If we do not study and understand this parable properly, we will have difficulty with all the other parables. This parable is a key to the other parables - and it points to the way of the New Birth. *“And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?”* -- Mark 4:13. Notice the seed in this parable is said to be the word of God. The individual is represented by soil (way side, rock, among thorns, and good ground). In any case, the ground is passive. It certainly is not represented as taking the seed, but it receives the seed. The ground doesn't make a decision. It is precisely that way with our first birth. We were passive. A seed was planted and, in the process of time and by the power of God -- we received our life. **[From my note above, you can see and realize that the good ground was the only ground that actually brought forth fruit. The soil had to be prepared - and prepared it was - by the Holy Ghost. - lk]**

That is how you and I received our new birth. We certainly can be born again without knowing what the Bible teaches concerning the way we were born again. Once we learn, however, let us give praise, honor, glory, and dominion to the great God who saved us.

Truly, salvation is of the Lord!