***The Sin Nature of Man

7LW-006***

"For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any 2-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both the joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed accurately handling the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope." Romans 15:4

Once Adam had contaminated the whole of humanity with sin guilt, there was no possible way for anyone to spend eternity in Heaven with God. The Bible makes it clear that the act of Adam had long range devastating effects. In Romans 5:12, the apostle Paul points out "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." All were participating with Adam in that moral guilt Romans 5:17-19, "For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness that resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One, the many will be made righteous."

**Separation a Consequence of Adam's Sin**

Man, his moral guilt, because of the act of Adam, is now separated from a holy God by a wall which is made up of 5 specific consequences resulting from Adam's sin. Man has no resources or any means whatsoever to get through this wall of separation, to get over from this condemnation and the destiny of the Lake of Fire over to the place of being absolute righteousness and a destiny in Heaven. God the Father, therefore, in grace, through His Son, Jesus Christ, had to remove this wall of separation Himself, and to reconcile lost man to Himself. Romans 5:10, "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

**No Way to Heaven Without Christ**

Personal acceptance by faith alone of this work of Jesus Christ, or removing the wall of separation results in a lost man's personal reconciliation to God's standard of absolute righteousness, and thus his right to eternal life in Heaven. Without absolute righteousness as good as Jesus Christ, you cannot go to Heaven, and there is no way that you can make it on your own.

This has to be a gift from God. This terrible wall of separation that Adam created has to be removed, block by block. When Jesus Christ on the cross declared that His work of atonement was finished, He was referring to the permanent removal of this wall between man and God and the resulting reconciliation between the two.

**Satan's Deception**

Satan has deceived most of mankind into thinking that lost man can remove this wall of separation on himself by himself, and thus to make himself eligible for Heaven. This is not possible, nor is it necessary. Romans 3:12 indicates that all have turned aside. Together they have become useless. There is none who does good. There is not even one. That tells us very clearly, you cannot do any kind of good works that will be acceptable to God as merit toward salvation, because none of us does any good. Everything from an unsaved person comes from his Sin Nature, and the Sin Nature may produce good things, but that is Human Good, and therefore it is under the judgment of God as well as the sins and evil that we feel that we are guilty of. Romans 6:23 sums it up by simply saying "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." That is the 2 alternatives. Man is not involved in salvation in producing it in any way. He's only involved in accepting it.

**First Block - Man's Captivity - Removed**

We've looked at 2 blocks in the wall. The first was the block of man's captivity in Satan's slave market of Sin. This was removed by redemption price paid by the Lord Jesus Christ for us. You no longer had to live like the devil and do his bidding. Man can walk away from evil. He can just say no; we Christians, much easier than people of the Old Testament, because we have the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit continually at our disposal in order to beat Satan and not waste your life,... very simple. You know the principles of doctrine, and you have to keep feeding on those daily, week in and week out in the church services. You confess known sins and maintain your temporal fellowship. And the result is there's a power flow and a guidance flow and a conviction flow that you'll know when you're out of line. And you can blow it off, and you may convince yourself that what you're doing is the will of God. But I want to remind you again, that all these differences of opinion will be resolved someday.

**Differences Settled**

It is like when General MacArthur stood on the decks of the Battleship Missouri anchored in Tokyo Bay, and the Japanese came on board. Their representatives have signed the documents of surrender. They went through the ceremony. Then after it was over, MacArthur stood up and said "the issues and differences between these nations have been resolved on the field of mortal combat so that peace may now ensue.

These proceedings are now concluded."... Words something to that effect. And what he said was, there was a difference of opinion between 2 nations and on a mortal field of combat, the difference was settled. And the side which was right was settled by who won the battle. The Judgment Seat of Christ should be viewed as the deck of the Battleship Missouri. It is going to be where all these differences, you know, when you go out to lunch after church and you discuss along with the enchiladas, you have roast preacher. And you discuss the differences you have with what Dr. Danish has taught, what he has said, and how he is wrong. I want you to remember. Always think about the deck of the Battleship Missouri, called the Judgment Seat of Christ. Every word Jesus says will be accounted for and these issues will be settled. When you take a difference of opinion, these issues are going to be resolved. So people who think they can remove this block, the barrier between man and God, are going to find how wrong they were. And the problem about the issue being resolved; you can't go back and fix it, you can't do anything about it. It's in the past, and what you have committed your life to, that will be the result. In terms of eternity for salvation, it'll be drastic. For the Christian, it'll be a loss of the value potential of the rewards of his life. The block of Satan's slave market of Sin, Christ has removed that stranglehold.

**Second Block - Spiritual Death - Removed**

Secondly, the block of being spiritually dead and therefore unable to provide the cost of salvation, which is spiritual death for one's sins. God has removed this by expiation, which means that God Himself has removed our moral guilt by having Jesus Christ die for us spiritually. That problem has been removed; it no longer stands in the way.

**Third Block - Man's Birth with an Old Sin Nature**

We have another block, the third one. This is the block of physical birth with an old sin nature birth. Physical birth is a miracle of God. It's a marvel of divine wisdom. God controls this mystery of human birth from the very first. That's why you can't kill a baby in the womb, because it is a work of God in progress, a creative work of God in progress that you are terminating. It is not just a blob of nothing. Psalm 127:3, "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward." Children are an act of God provided by His sovereign decision. In Psalm 139:13, the psalmists says, "For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb."

Any child which is conceived as a human being, is destined for a certain divine purpose. And therefore it is not a nothing. It will never become a dog or a frog or anything else. It will be a human being in the image of God.

I heard Dr. Dobson of Focus on the Family this morning on Meet the Press. Tim Russert asked him, "Is it true that you're thinking about encouraging all the millions of people who read your documents, read your publications, and who are standing with you, to abandon the Republican Party and to bolt it because of the failure of the Congress to enact protection against abortion and these other issues, life family issues." Dobson says "That is what we have in mind. We're hoping it won't happen. I'm going to spend all week in Washington now talking this over. It is our hope that these people are going to wake up." He said the reason Dole is not president today is because he abandoned the Christians, the conservative Christians who act on biblical principles, and in fact, spent more time attacking Gary Bauer than he did Bill Clinton. The time has come we're going to say enough is enough. We're going to call a halt to the issues of Biblical Christians being given a lick and a promise and they won't win elections without us. So the issue of unborn life is no small thing. Dobson was speaking from God's point of view. You cannot just blow off what people are doing to unborn children.

**All Men Born With Sin Nature**

Now, these children are an awesome thing and they're a thing of great delight. But they have a big problem the moment they open their mouth and they take their first cries. I don't know if that's when it happens.

I have no biblical ground to know whether it is at that point the spiritual death hits a child. But I know that after that first cry, he's dead spiritually. He may have been alive spiritually at that point, but that's a theological debate. The point is, once he takes that first breath, he is born spiritually dead.

That is the condition of everybody. Ephesians 2:1, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins," Paul says to the Ephesians. Obviously, they weren't physically dead. They were spiritually dead before they were saved. Since spiritually dead, they have no possible contact with God; because it is your spirit which is your point of contact with God. So fellowship with God is impossible. So every baby is born on the wrong side of the Great Wall of separation. They have earthly life only, but the Sin Nature destroys their spiritual life instantly. They are born spiritually dead.

**Spiritual Death Blinds to Spiritual Truth**

Man has contact with the physical world through his senses, through his body, which is the house of the soul. Men can understand natural truths through the mentality of the soul, but people are unable to grasp spiritual reality because the human spirit is dead. That's why people believe such crazy things. We are dumbfounded of what people think spiritually. It is because the natural man is religious. But like the Jews of old, they act without a knowledge of the truth. 1 Corinthians 2:14 indicates this. "

But a natural man," the unsaved man, "does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." They are spiritually understood. So this is a very big block in the wall. How in the world am I going to get over this to get over to God? I am spiritually dead. No way of contacting him. Now, Christ has removed the problem of my moral guilt by expiation, but I am still spiritually dead.

**God Must Provide Solution**

The solution must come from God. The reason man is spiritually dead is because parents pass on to the child from the father this Old Sin Nature. That is what is referred to in Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as through one man," Adam, "sin entered," the sin nature entered, "into the world, and death through sin," the sin nature, "so death spread to all men, because all sinned." That's why babies die. They have a sin nature and they are guilty of having participated in Adam's sin because he was our federal head. He acted in a way that put a guilt upon all mankind because we all descended from him. We all share what he is. Parents cannot give a child spiritual life; that must come from God through birth into His family. [Earthly] Parents cannot give them spiritual life.

We have many children who come to the Berean Youth Clubs who are outside of the circle of the Berean congregation.

Sometimes some of these children will win the annual award because they're enthusiastic, they demonstrate their devotion to the achievement program, and they're responsive to spiritual things. We tell parents that your son, your daughter is going to receive an award of the person of the year in that club. Every year, just like last Friday night, these people come. They have no contact within Berean Church except their children are benefiting, week in, week out. The youngster receives the award. And the minute the child walks back to the table, the mother or the father jumps up and they're out the door. It's been a drag evening to them. Instead of saying what a great thing has been done for my child; this child has progressed so spiritually that he's been recognized by these leaders who are not dummies, who have dealt with kids a long time and who recognize spiritual merit, and they can't wait to get out of here. It's just fun and games for them. Parents cannot give spiritual life because they don't have it.

Many of them can't give spiritual instruction because they don't have it. As we just read, Paul saying in 1 Corinthians, these people consider the Word of God foolishness. It's nice. I'd rather my son were here getting an award than stealing somebody's tires off his car, or all the other things that they could be doing.

But they don't understand the supremacy of spiritual life. If you're not spiritually alive, you're nothing. John 3:6 says "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Just as simple as that. 1 Peter 1:23 "for you have been born again," that means spiritually born, "not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God."

So whatever parents may do for their children, the most important thing is to give them the Word of God. The kid may grow up and be a fool. Right. We got the prodigals. They may thumb their nose at what the parents have given, but they're not kidding their parents. As Samuel was reminded when he felt so bad that the Jews wanted a king, and he knew it was a bad deal. He was so down in the mouth, and the Lord said to Samuel, "Cheer up! They haven't rejected you. They've rejected Me. My word has told them not to do this." Whatever a kid may do, at least he should have a chance to know better. That cannot be given except by a parent who has spiritual life and a parent who knows the doctrinal principles to pass on to that youngster.

Thus, everyone needs a birth which gives spiritual life in addition to the birth which gave physical life. That is the only way back to God through this particular block in the wall. You must be born again spiritually in order for this problem to be removed. And Jesus made it possible; He jerked that block right out of the wall. 1 John 3:3 says "And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, as He is pure." The hope of what? The hope of eternal life... because you are spiritually alive, that then affects the way you will live.

**The Solution is Regeneration**

So the divine solution for this is a theological word: "Regeneration." It's a long word, let me put it up here for you.

Palingenesia [G3824] is made up of 2 words: palin means again, genesia from Genesis means birth, so that the word means "again birth," that is born again. And we get the word regeneration from the Latin. Regeneration means to be born again spiritually. It comes from this Greek word. This word is used only twice in the whole Bible. One place is Titus 3:5 "He saved us not on the basis of deeds, which we have done in righteousness, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,"... the washing of regeneration, washing away of our sin and guilt, and the renewing spiritually by the Holy Spirit.

**The Last shall be First**

The other place that this word is used is in Matthew 19:28-30. "And Jesus said to them, 'Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration,'" that is, in the new spiritual birth, "'when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My namesake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last, first.'" On this occasion, the disciples were discussing with Jesus how hard it is for rich people to do right spiritually to even get into heaven. On another occasion, Peter said to the Lord, "Lord, we've left everything. We've left our professions. We've left our money. We've left our family. We've put it all out there. We're agape-type Christians. We went all the way with you. What's in the future for us?" The Lord said "You've got a glorious future. You followed me in the enterprise of regeneration. When I sit on my throne, you will also be special, in the millennial kingdom, ruling upon twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel." Then He reminds them, whatever you've left behind, you've taken with you to inherit in eternity. You don't leave anything. The only thing you leave behind is what you use for yourself. The rest goes with you. Will Christians believe that? Nooo... only the hard core agape type Christian will live like that and believe that. That's why Jesus says in verse 30, the people who are out there first in everything in life, they've got it all, they've got security, got the whole bit, are going to be the tail end of the line, the latrine cleaners of Heaven. But those who are not looked at very much, who putter along doing the job, the older they get they still stay on the job, serving Christ, doing what they can as you age so your capacities [dwindle], they are the ones who are suddenly going to be first in line in Heaven.

**Regeneration Gives Spiritual Life**

So this work of regeneration has to do with coming alive spiritually. That's how God has removed that block. The moment you trust in Jesus Christ as personal savior, your dead human spirit comes to life. Christ, who has previously removed through expiation all hindrance, removed all the problem, all that you owed to be spiritually alive. He takes the next step and he makes you spiritually alive. You're ready for Heaven.

This word spiritually alive, this concept of regeneration, has several other words in Scripture that describe it. One is the one that's very familiar to us, "Born Again." John 3:3, and 1 Peter 1:23 speak about being born again, that means being born again spiritually. I remember that fount of all theological and human wisdom, Phil Donahue, when he was still in business on his program, he would discuss spiritual things with somebody. And, the point of conflict was that you have to be born again to go to Heaven. There was, of all things, somebody in the audience, a lady who raised her hand, and said Mr. Donahue, "The problem you have is that Jesus said you must be born again to enter the kingdom of God." Donahue looked and said, "Did He say that?" That's what's out there. He thought that this was some kind of a fundamentalist Christian right notion, "You've got to be born again or you're not going to Heaven." He finally puts it, "You mean if a person isn't born again, he's not going to Heaven?" That's right. That's what the Bible says.

One feisty old gal stood up and said, "I'm a Jewess, I'm not born again and I'm going to Heaven." And I said, "No, you ain't." Talk about crazies out there. See, without the Word of God, you got nothing but your human mind. You get nothing but your contaminated judgment to make these decisions on. The Bible is very clear. You gotta be alive spiritually or you don't go to Heaven.

Another expression, you find this one in 1 John 5:1 is "born of God," same idea coming alive spiritually. In 1 John 5:1. You also have "born of Him," of Christ. Then in John 3:6, you have "born of the Spirit." Then in John 5:21 you have "gives life." In Ephesians 2:5, "make us alive." All these terms are variations of the idea of being born again spiritually.

**Man needs Regeneration**

So what does regeneration do? It makes you twice born. Man, everyone, is born into the world spiritually dead due to the presence of the old sin nature, which you have genetically passed on to you from your father. Therefore, everybody needs a new birth through a new father, into a new family to receive a new nature which is spiritually alive. God does not reform the Old Sin Nature.

**Man's Wrong Thinking**

That's where liberalism has led people. Liberalism has led to compassion for people. Liberalism has led to making people's lives better, giving them food and clothing and shelter and all these works of mercy. All of which are okay, but they are not the gospel. That's where earlier in the century the term came the social gospel. The Liberals said the fundamentalists have botched this all up. They're talking about being born again spiritually. What God means by salvation is to be born again in your social consciousness, to have a spirit of compassion, to help the people in need.

And what they were doing was saying, we're going to reform man. We still hear that argument today. Why do people do bad things? Well, because they got a bad home. You got a bad home environment. They're lacking things that they need.

Yet, a lot of you didn't have too good a home environment and you didn't turn out bums. A lot of you didn't have any instruction at home, but God picked you up. And boy, did he bring you into the family with great, great understanding so that you impress all of us. A lot of you were not from families that had everything under the sun materially, but that didn't cause you to go down the tube. This is the madness of human viewpoint that if you just give people what they need for life here, they'll be happy and they'll be right and all will be well. No, God does not reform the Old Sin Nature. What he does,... he gives you a new nature. So while you're here on this earth, the Spirit of God through that living human spirit and the Word of God will be able to guide you to overcome that old sin nature.

And finally, when you stand before Christ through death or the Rapture, that Old Sin Nature is permanently removed.

**Mechanics of Regeneration**

This removal of the sin nature and the production of regeneration is classically portrayed in John 3 with Jesus and Nicodemus, the great rabbi of the Sanhedrin. The removal of spiritual death, here is the mechanics. John, 3:1, "Now, there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;" Nicodemus was a ruler of the Sanhedrin. This was 70 men, Pharisees, who made up the ruling body of Israel. They ruled in religious matters and under the Romans they ruled in civil matters as well. So Nicodemus was high up there in the echelons of Jewish society. He was a ruler. He was a teacher. Now he came to Jesus at night. I don't know why. Maybe he was too busy with religious activities during the day doing his good works and his good deeds.

You see, the Jews made this terrible mistake. The Book of Romans lays this out. The Jews thought they got to Heaven by keeping the Mosaic Law. Paul came along, says, no! The Mosaic Law is a way of life. It's just a way of living; gives you the code and the style of life. The living reflects that Messiah is coming.

Everybody has always been born by grace through faith in Christ. You got that? Old Testament, Adam on, nobody's ever gone to Heaven except by faith in Jesus Christ, not by keeping any rules of any kind. People are saved before the cross looking forward to Messiah Savior; I'm trusting Him.

People after the cross were saved by looking back to the Messiah Savior; I trust Him to take me to Heaven. We Christians, you see, have a grace way of life. We don't live like Jews.

We don't have holy days. We don't have all of these things that we do that are holy places. The same person who considers some cathedral or church a holy ground, will go out and take his body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and he'll carouse half the night with it in some honkytonk low life dive as a believer.

And what respect is that for his temple? That's the temple you should respect now; your physical body. But the Jew always had to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

Well, right off the bat, Nicodemus has somehow missed the boat. But the Spirit of God is working on him and alerted him that there is something wrong here with what we're doing to this man Jesus, and the way we're treating Him, the back of the hand treatment we're giving to Him. What Jesus said rang a bell of truth to this man.

The question was, how could such an obviously nice sincere man need new birth spiritually? Spiritual birth comes hardest, of course, to people who are religious people. The unsaved church members are the hardest people to save because they're sure they have it right. They won't speak to you on the basis of Scripture, but only on the basis of what they've been taught all their life, and on the basis their human reason. Sins of pride and legalism are what hinder belief in the gospel.

Nicodemus was a VIP, very important person, among the Pharisees. John 3:2, "this man came to Him," to Jesus, " by night, and said to Him, 'Rabbi," Whoa... teacher,... that gives us his frame of reference... not Lord God, "Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one could do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Nicodemus came by night, and he says to Jesus, You are a rabbi, You are a teacher and You are from God.

Because these miracles that You perform, nobody could do unless You were from God. And in the Greek language, this expression "You have come from God" is right up at the first in that sentence. That makes it emphatic. He was saying "from God" right off the bat, that's who You are, I know that! I don't know "You are God," he hadn't gotten there yet. But the miracles focused attention on the message of Christ, confirming with divine power that Jesus was a teacher from God. Nicodemus, however, does not recognize Him as Messiah. He doesn't address Him as Yeshua Meshiah, Jesus the Messiah.

**In Adam, All Die**

John 3:3, "Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus knew what his problem was. He's trying to get to Heaven by keeping the laws of Moses. All that did would show him how bad he is. So right off the bat, Jesus says, let's get it straight, we can talk about all kinds of things in the Bible, that's how unsaved people like to do. But the only thing you need to know is you can't go to Heaven unless you're born again. Spiritually, you're dead. So Nicodemus is told there is no place in Heaven for an active religious person who does not have spiritual birth. He must be born again. And the Greek words "born again" means "born from above." Nicodemus didn't realize that he was spiritually dead because he had received an Old Sin Nature from his parents, and therefore he could not get to God.

As we pointed out in Ephesians 2:1, you were dead in your trespasses and sins while you were physically alive. Natural birth puts everybody into the wrong family, into Adam's family. Genesis 3:3 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 says "in Adam all die."

So what natural birth does is it gives us the wrong father, Satan. As John 8:44 points out and 1 John 3:10. Let's look up that one. 1 John 3:10 says "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother." Here, the expression of life is one of the indications indeed, of whether one is born again spiritually or not. But that isn't what counts. Nicodemus was a very kind man. Nicodemus was absolutely blind however, to a spiritual truth, and unable to enter the kingdom of God. He was spiritually dead, so he could not obey. He couldn't understand He couldn't please God. If you refuse to meet the requirement of new birth to meet God, then you can forget all of your Christianity, all of your church-i-anity, all of your hypocrisy and religion. You better enjoy this life all you can, because if you're spiritually dead, it's all going to end once you die.

John 3:4, "Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?'" Nicodemus proves that he is really a spiritually dead man. He can only think in physical terms, so he asks about reentering his mother's womb. Nicodemus should have known what it meant to be spiritually born again. Notice verses 9-10, "Nicodemus answered and said to Him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'You are a teacher of Israel,'" you are a rabbi, "'and you do not understand these things.'" Now what did Jesus mean by that? Well, Jesus was talking about Ezekiel 36, because the prophet Ezekiel had taught about being born again spiritually. Ezekiel 36:24-27, we should start in verse 25. "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I'll remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

So what he was saying was,... notice these words: clean water, ceremonial cleansing, washing away sin, and you will be clean, new heart and a new spirit. Those are exactly the concepts that Jesus brings in here to Nicodemus. He talks about these same ideas here again.

John 3:5, Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Born of water,... a lot of people made a very bad mistake here by thinking this means water baptism, and that thus we have a baptismal regeneration. [They think] no water baptism, no going to Heaven. While in the Bible, water, of course, has a literal meaning. If literal water is meant, the context will indicate that; that's how you know the difference. But this water is not water baptism.

What Jesus is talking about is spiritual realities to Nicodemus. And in the Bible, water has spiritual connotation. It is a symbol of cleansing. It was tied in Nicodemus' mind with what John the Baptist was doing. John the baptizer was using water to demonstrate moral cleansing, moral repentance of sin. This clicked right away with Nicodemus. He knew what John the Baptist was doing, that he was calling upon people to be washed publicly as a demonstration of their repentance of sin. So the Bible speaks about the gospel or salvation as water in Isaiah 55:1, and Revelation 22:17. The Bible, the Word of God, is called water Ephesians 5:26, and 1 Peter 1:23. The Holy Spirit is described as water, living water, in John 7:37-39. And in John 3:5 here, salvation is not meant; the general subject is being born again spiritually. And the means of that is the Word of God. That is the cleansing factor. In John 3:5, the Holy Spirit is not what is in mind. That comes later, when He talks about being born in spirit. What He's talking about here is the gospel, the Word of God, which brings spiritual regeneration. Nobody is saved unless they have received the gospel.

**Salvation Not Through Water Baptism, but the Gospel**

In 1 Corinthians 4:15, "For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers;" Paul says "for in Christ Jesus, I became your father," through the water of baptism?,...No, "through the gospel." So these people were washed through the water of the word. That is the explicit kind of statement that you have for example in Ephesians 5:26. Ephesians 5:26 says "that he might sanctify her," the church, "having cleansed her by the washing of the water with the word." It is the Word of God that cleanses us. Apart from anything else, we know this is not water baptism by the fact that is a human work. It would contradict everything else in the Bible of justification by faith alone. So that in itself would eliminate that. Whatever else it might mean, it cannot mean that.

Spiritual birth is impossible without the information of the Word of God. And Romans 10:17 says, how can people be saved if somebody doesn't give them what?...the cleansing water of the gospel. You cannot be cleansed of your sin and become spiritually alive unless you have the Word of God to do the cleansing. So you are born of the Word of God, the symbol of water and of the cleansing effect spiritually, and of the spirit.

**Holy Spirit Opens Door to Understanding Gospel**

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in the miracle regeneration. Since the unsaved has a dead human spirit, he cannot in any way comprehend or respond to the gospel.

Now here is a very big problem. My spirit is dead. I cannot have a point of contact with God. Romans 3:10-12, "as it is written, 'THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD.'" They're all spiritually dead. "'ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS, THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.'" Spiritual death is spiritual death. How in the world are you going to get through to that lost relative of yours with the gospel if he's spiritually dead?... And that's the only point of contact to get spiritual knowledge, you cannot get knowledge from God unless you're spiritually alive. This is the one place the Bible says that God the Holy Spirit acts in place of your human spirit. When you are dead in your trespasses and sin. When you are in your unsaved condition, then God the Holy Spirit comes in and He overrides your dead human spirit. And He impacts your mind with the truth of the gospel, so that gospel water may wash away your sins as you trust in Christ the Savior.

**Concerning Sin**

Where's that? John 16:7-11. These verses give you the guideline as to how you should pray when you want to get somebody saved. "But I tell you the truth," Jesus says, "it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper," God the Holy Spirit, "shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." Why is that important? "And He, when He comes, will convict the world," the unsaved people, "concerning," 3 things, "sin, and righteousness, and judgment." Until a person is convicted of these 3 things, he cannot be saved. He will not come to Christ. He won't even be interested. How can that happen to somebody who is spiritually dead, who can't understand these things? The Holy Spirit comes in and He clarifies this to the unsaved person. "Concerning sin, because they do not believe Me." God has no problem with your sin any more. Christ paid for every one of them. The sin that's going to be disastrous to you is not believing in Christ the Savior. People don't understand it until the Holy Spirit whispers in their ear, sin is not the problem. You can be as good as you want. Hell is full of moral people today. But what you need is to trust in Christ to save you. If you do not do that, that is a moral guilt that will take you into the Lake of Fire. That's the only one you have to worry about.

**Concerning Righteousness**

Secondly, [continuing in John 16:7-11] "concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me." Absolute righteousness, everybody could see it in Christ. He could stand up before the world and say anybody want accuse me of a single error, of a single sin? All mouths were closed, and everybody hated Him. Christ said, "You have seen in Me what it is to be a righteous man. You've seen in Me what it is to live a godly life. I'm going, and you're not going to see that anymore.

And the Holy Spirit will make it clear to the unsaved heart how unrighteous they are." He will crush them with their sense of sin.

**Concerning Judgment**

Third, [continuing in John 16:7-11] "Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." He's going to make it clear that Satan has been beaten on the cross. Satan can no longer hold you in his slave market. Satan can no longer hold against you your spiritual death. Satan no longer can keep you spiritually dead. God's judgment upon him has terminated his power over death.

**Understanding Leads to Salvation**

When a person understands this and until he understands these 3 things about sin, righteousness and judgment, he'll never make the decision to go for Christ. So if we want somebody to be saved, say, "Father, I prayed the Holy Spirit would go and bring conviction of the persons sin of rejecting Christ, his lack of righteousness to match up to God's absolute standard, and the fact that Satan can no longer hold him unless he chooses to stay in that family. In 1 Peter 1:23, "for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God." "Not a perishable seed" refers to physical birth from parents with their moral corruption, with their Old Sin Nature. "Imperishable" refers to the spiritual birth from the cleansing Word of God through the living seed, the Word of God and the spirit product. The word reveals our need for another birth, our spiritually dead state, our sentence of eternal death, and the rescue awaiting through faith in Jesus Christ.

At this point, the Lord Jesus Christ begins to move very quickly and forcibly against this confident man in his religion, but with his peripheral doubts now, and we'll begin next time with verse 7, this dramatic confrontation of the process of regeneration without which no man will ever see God.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1999

[**Back to the Seven Last Words of Christ index**](https://www.christiandataresources.com/sevenlastwords.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)