***Regeneration, No. 1

7LW-007***

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

"For you have been born again, not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding Word of God." 1 Peter 1:23 "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths." 2 Timothy 4:2-4

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" 2 Peter 3:18

**The Barrier Between Man and God**

The Death of the Lord Jesus Christ, while bearing the moral guilt of the sins of all mankind, permanently removed a wall separating a holy God from lost sinners. This wall was made up of 5 basic blocks, which the death of Jesus Christ as mankind's substitute in death demolished. The removal of this barrier between God and man has now reconciled the lost sinner to God's standard of absolute righteousness for Heaven. To benefit by this enormous grace provision of God, the lost sinner must accept Jesus Christ as his personal savior. Sin is no longer the issue between God and man. The only issue is whether we will accept the grace gift of salvation.

**Salvation Explained**

The way one accepts the Savior is explained to us in John 1:12. The way to accept Christ as Savior and to benefit by the fact that this wall separating man from God has been demolished is a very simple procedure. John 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." "As many as received Him," referring to Jesus Christ. The sinner must be brought under conviction of his doomed and helpless condition by the Holy Spirit, in order that he may make the decision to receive Christ as Savior. Nobody decides on his own to be saved. This is an act of the grace of God that brings conviction relative to sin, righteousness, and judgment. And then the person suddenly is driven into the arms of the Savior. The sinner brought under conviction, realizes that he is doomed unless he receives Christ as Savior.

To the one who received Jesus Christ is given the authority. "He gave the right," or the authority, "to become children of God," that is, to become born again people in God's family with absolute righteousness to their credit. The way one receives or accepts Jesus as savior is by believing in his name. This is a very important Scripture.

**Belief is Sufficient!**

I pointed this out to you on several occasions, and particularly a very famous evangelist who, to a great audience said "It is not enough to believe in Christ. You must receive him as your Savior." I said, "What? It is not enough to believe in Christ? You must receive him as your Savior?" Then he turned to John 1:12. "But as many as received him." He said, "You see what I mean? You have to receive Christ if you want to go to Heaven. It is to them that the authority is given to become the children of God." And he stopped. I'm waiting for the rest of the verse because I happen to know what the rest of the verse was. And the rest of the verse explains how to receive Christ. You want to accept Christ, you believe in his name.

Never sell the devil short. I don't care at any level. Never sell him short in your own life. That Sin Nature is there. You may now imagine the most vile, corrupt, destructive thing that you could think of that a human being can do and recoil with horror from it. And I guarantee you, it's lying right there within you, waiting to get a chance to come to the surface. That's why the Bible said "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12. No one is immune from the devil's deception.

**Neglect Not the Gathering of the Saints**

That's why you've done the right thing by being here this morning. This instruction in the Word of God will enormously immunize you from being deceived by Satan and to squelch the attempts of the Sin Nature to take over. That's why the Bible says never let a Sunday go by and be absent from the church service. Never, never, never let a Sunday morning, the Bible says, go by without being at a church service. Never, the Bible says, let a Sunday evening go by without being at the church service. It doesn't say it quite that way. Hebrews 10:25 says neglect not the assembling of yourselves together. That means when the saints gather for instruction in the Word of God, be there! Now, you may say, "Well, I'm not always there, but I don't have too much trouble. I'm not out there in those gross things of the world." No, but I tell you what you are doing. You're stripping your eternity short.

Every service you miss is a potential contribution to having less rewards in Heaven, less treasure stored there, because your absence is what cools you from using your spiritual gifts. Think of your spiritual ability right now. You have these 9 gifts that you may discover that you have one or more of. How are you doing with using it? That's your life. Nothing else counts. Suddenly you're going to be in eternity one day and that's all that's going to count. The thing that will cool you on not being on deck for serving Him, is being out of these services. Without feeding upon the Word of God, you cannot sustain spiritual life. That's what it's all about.

Now, you can be in the service and you can be as negative as a blind bat to the instruction you hear and you're in the same position as if you weren't here. Your mind can be all over the yard instead of on the Word of God and the instruction be given. You'll be out of it just as much. Without the sustenance of doctrine, you cannot survive in this world. So you wonder why young people who've grown up under good instruction in the Word of God and good Christian homes, what happens to them? They get off in the world, and suddenly the world doesn't seem such a bad place to them. They've lost their orientation. They've lost their perspective on who is the enemy and who is the friend of God. How does that happen? It happens by not being under instruction in the Word of God, not being in the Bible daily yourself, and not being receptive, saying "Amen Lord" to the things that you hear. Because like Berean's of old, you look in the Scriptures and say, "Yeah, that's there. What he says is there. If it's there, then he's right and I must obey it. It's the Word of God."

**Salvation is an Act of Acceptance**

So to be saved, there's a very specific guideline. And it is terrible when this is confused and misdirected, even at the highest echelons of evangelism. Do you want to receive Christ? Yes, you do have to receive him. Another word for that is acceptance. You've heard us say many times that salvation is an act of acceptance. It is not an act of commitment. You don't have to commit yourself to Him as Lord. (You should want to, but it's not part of salvation!)

It is so sad sometimes to hear good Bible teachers. I heard one on the radio. I always enjoy listening to him; he is so on target. I'll be doggone if yesterday, he doesn't tell people "to believe in Jesus Christ and make Him your Lord and Savior." You have to make Him your Savior first. Even then, he didn't really say believe. He said "let Him into your life and make Him your Lord and Savior." You can't be saved by letting Christ into your life. That's a meaningless phrase. How do you do that,... unbutton your shirt,... open your coat,... come in? This is such deception. You do have to receive Him and He does have to be your Lord. But if you talk about making Him your Lord, you're talking about commitment, "I'm going to do this,... I'm going to live like this,... I promise this, I promise that,... I'll clean up my life," that will take you straight into the Lake of Fire. That's what we call Lordship Salvation. It's popped up in recent years, very deceptive! If you're not on guard and catch that little disorientation of promising God that if He'll take you to Heaven, you'll do this and this and this and that you will live a good life, you have automatically interjected works into salvation as a grace gift.

**Salvation is Believing in His Name**

Salvation is an acceptance, acceptance of what Christ has already done. It's all done. Sin is no problem. Sin is no issue. Everything's been paid for. The wall has been demolished. What you do is that you receive or accept Christ as Savior by trusting, by believing in His name.

**What's in a Name?**

The Lord's name, [G3686] Onoma O n o m A. That's how it looks in the Greek language. But this verse is saying some very enormously important things. The name of Jesus, the name of the Savior in Greek looks like this. [G2424] Iesous - I e s o u s, that's the name we are supposed to believe in, His name. What does that mean, believe in His name? Well, that name must mean something, have some kind of meaning because that's what we're going to believe in.

This name was not just arbitrarily picked by His parents. Both Mary and Joseph were explicitly told by God what to name this child. In Luke 1:31, we read "And behold," speaking to Mary, "you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him 'Iesous'." "You shall name Him Jesus." Now, the Hebrew form of this name is what gives us a great deal of information, because this word in Hebrew is the name Joshua. And Joshua looks like this in the Hebrew, [H3091] Yehoshua - Y e h o s h u a. And Yehoshua is a name which is used other places in the Bible, that is, as Joshua.

Joshua is Jesus in Greek; it is Yehoshua in Hebrew. And it is used apart from Jesus Christ sometimes in the Bible. For example in Acts 7:45, "And having received it in their turn, our fathers brought it," the tabernacle, "in with Joshua." Guess what's in the Greek. Iesous brought it in, Jesus brought it in, Yehoshua. "Upon dispossessing the nations whom God drove out before our fathers, until the time of David." There, by the context, we know that this does not refer to Jesus the Christ, but to Joshua, the man who followed Moses in authority in the Exodus generations. Hebrews 4:8 does the same thing. Hebrews 4:8, "For if Joshua," And in the Greek, it's Iesous, "for if Iesous had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that." Joshua didn't bring them into the fullness of rest, there were other things that were in the way for that generation, their rebellion against going in. But there we have another example where this name Joshua is used and it's Jesus in the text.

The meaning of Yehoshua is found in Matthew 1:21. This is why we believe in this name. Matthew 1:21, this is the information now being given to Joseph, "She," referring to Mary, "will bear a Son; and you shall call His name," Yehoshua, "Jesus," in Greek, "for He will save His people from their sins." The word "Yehoshua" means savior. Isn't that interesting? The word Jesus means savior. That's why you believe in His name. What He is represented by in His name, He is the Savior. That's why you believe in His name as the way to receive Him as Savior.

The Hebrew name Yehoshua actually means Yahweh is salvation, meaning savior. The word Yahweh is actually what is here in this word. It looks like this. These little points here are the vowels. This word is "Yehovah." This is the most sacred name. If I were a Jew, I would not say this name in front of you. In our Bible, this is always like this "L0RD," capital letters. That's how you know that it's Yehovah in the Hebrew. This is the most sacred name of God. This is the great name of God; it's the covenant maker with Israel. It is so sacred that they will not even let it pass out of their human lips through their mouth. When the Jews read the Bible and they come to this, they substitute another name for Lord, which is Adonai. They'll come to this and they'll say the word Adonai, but they'll know by looking at it that it's the 4 letters. One, two, three, four, these 4 letters are called a sacred Tetragrammaton. And it is right here in the middle of this text [the name Yehoshua]. Yehovah is right here, God, Savior.

So this name of Christ that we are to believe in refers to Christ the Savior. That's why this word [G3686] Onoma in Scripture sometimes is a very technical meaning. It is used to refer to God Himself as a person. For example, in Acts 2:21, this is done. Acts 2:21, "AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." What does it mean to call on the name? It means to call on God as Savior shall be saved. The way you call upon God as the Savior One is by believing in Christ Jesus and His gospel offered. Matthew 12:21, "AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE," in His name. This is referring once more to the name of Christ, our God. He is the Savior in His name, all that His name represents, as the Savior. That is why He was named Jesus. One more,... Revelation 13:6 also uses the word name, [G3686] Onoma, in this way. Revelation 13:6, "And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name." This is the antichrist speaking blasphemies against God during the tribulation. He speaks against His name. That is, he speaks against the person of God Himself.

**His Name is Savior**

So when we are told in John 1:12 that the way you go to Heaven is by believing in His name, it is because His name is Savior. That is why you believe in Him, in terms of being Savior of all mankind. In Acts 4:12 we read, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name," the name Jesus, the Savior name, "under Heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." So all the names that people turn to; Mohammed, Buddha, Joseph Smith, and all the other names of the religious world, those names do not bear the connotation of savior. That is the name meaning of the name of Jesus Christ. To believe in the name of Jesus thus means to believe in what his name connotes, Savior of mankind.

**Every Block of the Wall Removed**

And believing in the name of Jesus is to believe His gospel promise, that promise to give salvation to anyone who trusts in Him alone as Savior with no addition of human good works or religious ritual. Jesus Christ is received by the lost sinner by believing in Him as Savior, and so becoming a child of God who is fit for Heaven. It is just that simple. Christ has removed the wall, every block has been demolished. Now you can cross over; but the cross is the way to cross over. It is by believing in Christ the Savior in order to have that salvation.

**Though the Wall is Gone, Man Must Accept God's Grace**

Otherwise, the wall is gone. You could have come across. You'll end up in a Lake of Fire. By what? "But as many as received Him." That's it, acceptance! You know whether you accept something or don't. You know very easily when you hear me say something, whether you accept it; "yeah, that's true," or "that's good advice." Or you don't accept it as good advice. This is no mystery here. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to be an evangelist for 14 years before he founded Dallas Seminary. I remember him telling us in class one day, "Men, people know what it means to believe, it means to sit down on the chair and trust it's going to hold you up, cast yourself upon it. You take it as being true." He said, "I found people so confused as to their salvation and their assurance because they didn't know if they had really believed. And so I proceeded to prepare a series of sermons on what it means to believe in Christ the Savior." And he said "It was the greatest flop of my life." You don't and you can't explain to people how to believe. That's an act of faith. It's an act of trust. And everybody knows whether you really consider Christ trustworthy to cast your eternal soul in His hand or you don't.

**Assurance Based on God's Word, Not Man's Works**

But when you have received Him, "to them He gave the authority to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name." Assurance that one is saved is based on having believed in all that the name of Jesus connotes, that's what it comes down to, the sinless God-man who satisfied God's justice for us, which demanded death for our sins. That's what 1 John 5: 13 refers to. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God," There you have it again, the name Savior. Now you know what that means. It's a technical use for Savior; it's a technical use for [G2424] "Iesous" meaning Savior, it's a technical use for [H3091] "Yehoshua" which means God is salvation, to believe in His name, in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.

Now, this particular Scripture tells us that we know we have something in the way of eternal life. I remember a man one time in my teenage years, hearing his testimony. He said, somebody has asked me, "How do you know that you're born again?" And his answer was "because I was there when it happened." I said, "That's great. I'll use that line." And I have... I don't anymore. It suggested something experiential, that I knew that this had happened. However, the Greek word for "know" here looks like this. It's the Greek word, [G1492] "oida," O-I-d-a. There's a different word for knowing. It looks like this, G i n o s k o, [G1097] Ginosko. Ginosko is what I learned from my experience, I learned how to follow a procedure, how to build something because I get experience in it and I get to know from my experience certain things. That one's not there. The one that is there is "oida. The Greek word "oida" means it is something that comes to you on the basis of information. The information that has to come to you is the one that's in the Bible. You have to know the objective information of the Bible, not something from your subjective experience of saying "I feel really saved now" or that something in your mind says "I really believe I am saved." You know you're saved, not from those experiences of your mental processes or your emotions, but you know it from the fact that God has spoken!

Now, that's a very serious statement. If God has spoken, indeed which He has, for you to say, "Gee, I'm not sure," that is a very big insult to the Almighty. Because He didn't ask you to feel it, He didn't ask you to think your way through it. He told you how it is. He has explained it to you. The information is there, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Receive Him by believing in His name.

**God's Assurance is Eternal**

This particular Scripture also has another feature, this particular word "oida," and that is that it's in that Perfect Tense. Perfect Tense is illustrated by a dot and a line that just goes on forever. So what this is saying is that you will know, you will have assurance from the point that you hear the gospel and believe it, and that assurance will go on forever. If you don't feel that assurance, you're looking for it in a wrong way, a feeling. If you have reasoned through that there might be some problem, that's the wrong way. [G1492] "oida" says that God has spoken and you think that God is telling the truth, so you accepted. At that point you have a ground of assurance. You do not have a ground of assurance in any religious system that tells you that, like Roman Catholicism, that you must perform certain works or you will not go to Heaven. No Catholic expects to go to Heaven. He's just glad to get into Purgatory, the way-station where possibly he may eventually get up there. But if you take God's word for the truth that it is and you have it, then you have an assurance that begins at the point of your salvation and goes on forever. It is Active Voice in the Greek language, which means that it is your personal assurance. You are the recipient of this assurance. But it is subjective in its mode, which means that it's potential, because it does depend upon your believing in the name of Christ and all that that name stands for as far as being Savior. If you don't believe in that name, in terms of Savior, you will not have assurance. So it's a potential thing.

But it says then in 1 John 5:13, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know," on the basis of the objective testimony of doctrine, "that you have eternal life. What does "these things" refer to? It refers to the previous context, verses 9-12. We'll just read them. 1 John 5:9-12 "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater;" that's the [G1492] oida information of doctrine, "for the witness of God is this, that He has borne witness concerning His Son." Where did He bear that witness? In Scripture! "The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself;" (Nobody believes unless you have the witness of the gospel. When you get the gospel, you've got something to believe in to be saved.) "The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar because he has not believed in the witness that God has born concerning His Son." So someone gives you a true basis of salvation. You're one of those fortunate lost human beings that into your hand comes a Berean evangelism brochure that tells you exactly, scripturally, how to get into Heaven, through trusting in Christ as your personal savior, through trusting in that name which represents salvation. But you reject it and say "I don't believe this. It's not what my grandmother taught me. My grandmother certainly knew what was the truth. I know my grandmother could not be wrong, I don't care what the Bible says. My grandmother doesn't have any hair on her knees because she's always on her knees praying and worn it off. I know she's got to be right," whatever nonsense you want to convince yourself. But the objective Word of God is still the truth.

Verse 11 "And the witness is this," what has God said that you're thumbing your nose at? "That God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." This comes as a gift. You have not earned it. This life is in His Son, the Savior, because He's removed the wall, the barrier of separation. "He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." The eternal life comes to those who have Christ as personal savior.

**Our Confidence is in Christ, Not Ourselves**

Then John says, I wrote this to you to understand that there is this objective basis, not a subjective basis, not how you feel about it or somebody else feels about it, in order to be saved. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God," that say Your name, "in order that you may know that you have eternal life." There may be other things in your situation that might make you have some doubts sometime; you're tired, things go badly, ... But you have to remember that your objective is Christ and that your confidence is in Him, and that your feelings will be manipulated out of all touch with truth by Satan if you let him do it. So a person to benefit by this wall being removed must receive Christ as personal savior by an act of faith in Him, in Him as the only qualified savior that God the Father, will accept.

What we have seen thus far in this terrible barrier is, first of all, there is this block of the slave market of sin. The lost sinner is in captivity in Satan's slave market of sin. This has been removed by the act of redemption. Christ paid the price of redemption, which was death. Then there is another block that we have looked at, and that is that the lost sinner is spiritually dead. He is spiritually dead because of his moral guilt for his sin. This has been removed by expiation, by the death of Christ. The moral guilt on the cross has been expunged. It's been rubbed out. Third block, that we are currently looking at is the Old Sin Nature. The sinner is born with an Old Sin Nature which results in his spiritual death. The way the spiritual death problem is removed, you can't go to Heaven spiritually dead, and you can't even believe the gospel when you're spiritually dead, so God the Holy Spirit comes in and he illuminates your mind so that you're capable of believing the gospel and you're capable of trusting in Christ. This spiritual death is removed by regeneration of the sinner's Human Spirit. His human spirit is brought to life. This is because Christ paid spiritual death in our behalf. So that one's been removed.

**The Law is Not an Entry Into Heaven**

That fascinating block has led us to John 3, where Nicodemus, the ruler rabbi authority in Israel, comes one night to have a private conference with Jesus Christ. Nicodemus recognized that Jesus was from God because of the miracle power that Christ had, saying a mere man could not have done the things that He did.

Nicodemus was interested in going to Heaven, but he was depending on what every Jew today depends upon to go to Heaven, keeping the Mosaic Law. It is not unkind for us to say "among the people who will miss the small gate in the narrow road to Heaven will be every Jew who lives today who does not accept Christ as personal savior." How can you say that? Well, these are good people. Yes, they're trying to keep the Mosaic Law. They can't do it. They do the best they can with it. They believe that God will favor them because of the noble effort they made. But the apostle Paul dealt with this in Galatians. This is a book that deals with legalism, keeping rules to get to Heaven. That is a works salvation. Galatians 2:15-16, "We are Jews by nature, and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless," Yes, as a Jew, you got out in first place with God, you've got a privileged position. "Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified." What does it mean to be justified? Immediately your mind should leap to the answer. What does it mean to be justified? Justification means that you are in absolute righteousness. You are positionally credited with absolute righteousness. You are as good as Jesus Christ. And seeking justification, that kind of righteousness, through the keeping the works of the Mosaic Law is a dead end street.

And that's what Nicodemus was doing. So you have to understand that that this is what bothered him. He sensed that Jesus was condemning the keeping of the Mosaic Law as the procedure, the entrance way, into Heaven.

So Jesus told Nicodemus that to go to Heaven, you had to be born again spiritually. Nicodemus showed his own spiritually dead condition by not understanding that Jesus meant a spiritual birth, not a physical birth needed for Heaven. So Jesus, explained the spiritual birth of regeneration, which was necessary for reaching Heaven. John 3:5, "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly,'" to emphasize truth here, "'I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'" We have pointed out that the lost must be borne of water where Jesus is using the term water symbolically, as the Bible does use it, in terms of the Word of God, specifically the word of the gospel. You must be born again by having the message of the gospel given to you, by the message which says believe in the name of Jesus which is the name of the savior and all it connotes, by faith in Christ to take you to heaven.

**The Living Water of Eternal Life**

This concept of the Word of God as water is found in various places in Scripture. One is Isaiah 55:1. "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost." This passage is a passage that deals with salvation by the grace of God. And Isaiah the prophet is saying it doesn't cost anything, it's a gift from God. What are you accepting? You're accepting the cleansing water of the word of the gospel. Believe in the savior, which is coming. Revelation 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let him who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." And then, same concept, Ephesians 5:26 "that he might sanctify her," that is the church, "having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word," There it explicitly says that water is a symbol for the Word of God that cleanses. Finally, 1 Peter 1:23 "for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable," that is flesh, "but imperishable," that is spirit, "that is, through the living and abiding Word of God." We are cleansed and born again through the washing of the water of the word, the word of the gospel. So to be spiritually reborn, one must believe the gospel, which is the water of eternal life. The water baptisms of John the Baptizer were on the mind, in the background, of Nicodemus. He saw what was happening, and that indicated, that brought to Nicodemus' understanding, that somehow going to Heaven, getting right with God, included repentance.

That's exactly what the baptisms of Jesus were about. In Mark 1:4-5 "John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judah was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins." The word baptism means identification. It was never translated [G907]"baptizo"; so they just transliterated letter for letter into English because there was so much debate and confusion on it. But if you translate the word baptism from the Greek, it means identification. These people were of John's baptism, not Christian baptism. These people were following the message of John the Baptist, who says, "I'm the forerunner. The Messiah is at hand. The kingdom of God promised to David is about to be established on this earth. Those of you who are ready to receive this Messiah Savior, this King, demonstrate that by expressing your repentance in this symbolic act of baptism." And they were flocking to the Jordan River. And John was baptizing them left and right for repentance of their sin and they were ready to receive the Messiah.

But there's another side. Repentance means a turn from your false gods and your evil. There's another side, you cannot repent unless you do something else at the same time. Guess what it is? You have to believe the gospel, free grace salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. In Mark 1:15 "and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" And there you have the 2 sides of the coin, repent and believe in the gospel. Never separate repentance, which in Greek means to change your mind, [G3340] metanoeo, change your mind. You cannot change your mind from your dead gods to the living God unless you believe in that living God. To change your mind requires you to trust in the living Savior.

So the lost must be borne of the Word of God, the gospel, to cleanse him. But also, John told Nicodemus, you must be born of the Spirit. This is referring to what God the Holy Spirit does when He comes in. What does He do? He regenerates, He gives you a living human spirit. In Titus. 3:4-7,.the apostle Paul sums up this transformation in this way, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared," in Christ that is, "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness," not on a basis of some commitment to Him or human effort, "but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration," washing with the water of the word of the gospel that was believed, "and renewing by the Holy Spirit," the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, to give you a living human spirit, "whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified," being declared absolute righteousness, "by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The Holy Spirit brings conviction to the lost, those that are elect relative to sin, righteousness, and judgment, He leads them then to trust in Christ as Savior. The believing sinner is baptized then by the Holy Spirit into Christ, and he's in the family of God permanently, once for all.

1 Corinthians 12:13, listen carefully, "For by one Spirit," by one Holy Spirit, "we were all baptized into one body," Now, did you notice something here? There are 7 baptisms in the Bible. Three are wet and 4 are dry. This is one of the dry ones. There is a baptism of John, that's wet. There is a baptism of Jesus, that's wet. There's a baptism of the church age and that's wet. But none of those are the same. They're all identifying with a different facet of the work of God and the person of Christ. But here, the Holy Spirit baptizes us, a dry baptism, into the body of Christ. "Whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, we were all made to drink of one Spirit." I tell you that so you will not be foolish enough to make the mistake of thinking when it says we were all baptized into Christ, you will say, "See, you have to have water baptism to go to Heaven." No,... water baptism is a work, and it will keep you out of Heaven if you bring it to God for that reason. Romans 8:9, "However, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," you're not under the carnal sin nature, you're in the Holy Spirit, "If indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." Which is what the previous reference, 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, that we receive the Holy Spirit when we were baptized into it. "If indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." If God the Holy Spirit is not in you, you are not a born again believer.

So in John 3:5, Jesus made it very clear to Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water," the cleansing doctrine of salvation, grace salvation through faith in Christ, "and the Spirit," the Holy Spirit, by being baptized into Christ and the Spirit regenerating you to a to a human spirit that is alive, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Then in John 3:6 he summarizes, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Tonight we'll go on at this point where Jesus takes Nicodemus to task, that he should have been surprised by this concept. It is so simple, yet it is so real, and it is the only way.

Our Father, We thank you for this Thy truth. We pray for Thy application to us and for our confidence that Thou art able to keep Thy word in saving us because the wall that separates us has been removed, and our spiritual death that kept us out of Heaven now has been completely changed. And we are spiritually alive. With the saints of Heaven, we say Hallelujah. Praise His name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1999

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