***Regeneration, No. 2

7LW-008***

**Belief Results in Regeneration**

The Lord Jesus Christ in His death on the cross paid the price of spiritual death for all mankind for the sins of the world. This made it possible for the lost sinner who believes the gospel to be made spiritually alive to qualify for Heaven. Being born again spiritually is accomplished through the act of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Nicodemus, the ruler and teacher of the Jews, was told by Jesus at that night meeting they had, that regeneration was the result of the cleansing water of the gospel, the Word of God, and of the baptism of the Holy Spirit into Christ. Regeneration is the result of receiving Christ as one's personal savior by believing in His name.

**The Name of Jesus**

The name Jesus in Greek is the name Joshua in Hebrew, and they both mean "Lord is salvation." So that's what Scripture tells us, to believe in His name is to believe in Him as the savior, the one and only. Thus the name of Jesus Christ means savior and all that that constitutes. Salvation is an act of personal acceptance of God's free gift of salvation by believing in the name of Jesus, which connotes the sinless God-man who as savior satisfied the justice of God, which demanded the death penalty.

**The Need for Rebirth**

We continue in John 3, studying the experience of Nicodemus. We are now going to pick up at verse 7, John 3:07, the need for spiritual rebirth, of regeneration. The necessity for being born again spiritually to go to Heaven is not surprising and should not have been surprising to Nicodemus; though it was. John 3:7-8, "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' Do not marvel that I tell you you must be born again, that is, to be born from above. In this passage, we won't stop to do the details. But you will notice in these verses, for example, in verse 5, you have the word water, and you have the word spirit. You have also in this verse seven, the words born again. These are identical to the concepts that were spoken in Ezekiel 36:24-26, which we previously looked at, where you had the words clean water, new heart, and new spirit. Jesus is simply using words Nicodemus is acquainted with from the Book of Ezekiel. That's why Jesus said, "you're a teacher of the Law, and you're asking me? How can it be that a person spiritually dead can come back to spiritual life?" That was the whole point of what was being spoken of by the Prophet Ezekiel. So these words are perhaps not as meaningful to us, but they were very significant to Nicodemus. He knew exactly what they meant.

The first birth we have is physical birth, the birth of the body with a soul, but the second birth gives a living human spirit. John 3:8 illustrates that spiritual birth can't be seen as a physical birth can, but the results of spiritual birth are as evident as a result of a wind blowing. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it; but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the spirit. Being born spiritually is a great reality. This is not some mystical concept. We are all born physically alive, spiritually dead. Until you are spiritually alive, you cannot go to Heaven.

So what Jesus is trying to tell Nicodemus, 'Nicodemus, you're a great scholar of the Bible. You're a great student. You know the Old Testament Scriptures, and you have a good mind. You are capable of discerning spiritual principles. But you're dead. You're not going to Heaven. If you continue on the road in which you are now going, you're going to end up as one of the all-time great people who had great knowledge, a student of the Bible who's going to be sitting in the Lake of Fire. What you don't have is personal regeneration.'

Now, Nicodemus was completely puzzled by this concept. In John 3:9, "Nicodemus answered and said to Him, 'How can these things be?'" He wondered how it was possible for a person, who is spiritually dead, to be brought back to spiritual life. He did understand the problem of spiritual death. He understood that from Old Testament Scriptures. But somehow he had slipped up on Ezekiel 36:24-26, which explained all that, how it was possible to come alive spiritually. So in John 3: 10, Jesus marveled at Nicodemus that as a teacher of Scripture that he had never grasped this concept of regeneration. John 3:10, "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?'"

**Spiritual Regeneration Foretold-New Heart, New Covenant**

The Old Testament prophets had foretold just such a spiritual transformation. For example, the Prophet Isaiah, Isaiah 32:15, "Until the spirit is poured out upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fertile field, and a fertile field is considered as a forest." When Christ comes to rule as a righteous king over this world, having disposed of world government and the antichrist and the whole tribulation gang, then the Spirit will be poured out upon us from on high. The coming of the Spirit into the lives of people is what spiritual regeneration is all about.

Also in the book of Joel. Joel 2:27-28, "Thus, you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, that I am the Lord, your God, and there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame. And it will come about after this that I will pour out my spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions." This almost sounds like a charismatic church meeting, but when Christ is ruling this world and Satan is in prison, religion will not be an issue. The Old Sin Nature will not be able to distort the spiritual things of God. So that's exactly what's going to happen. People really will have the Spirit of God upon them who are born again. People will prophesy under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. People will have dreams that will give them a relationship of understanding of depth before God. The young men will have visions brought to them of understanding from the Spirit of God. It will be an expansion of Scriptures in the most magnificent way. People read this today and they tried to imitate it, but it's all fake.

What this refers to here in these Old Testament passages is a new heart, which God said He's going to give to the Jewish people. In 1 Samuel 10: 6, "Then the spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily, and you shall prophesy with them and be changed into another man." Saul has been privately anointed as King of Israel by Samuel, and Samuel tells him that he is operating under a very privileged condition. In the Old Testament people who were believers were not all indwelt by the Holy Spirit permanently and automatically. He came and went as He had a purpose for that person. He had a great purpose for Saul to be the leader of this nation. Indeed, what was happening was that Samuel was briefing Saul on what's going to happen to him. 'The Spirit of the Lord is going to come upon you, Saul, mightily. You shall prophesy. You will speak the mind of God to people with Him. You will be changed into another man.' What is that talking about? Spiritual regeneration. Nicodemus forgot that passage.

Then there's Jeremiah. Jeremiah 31:33, "But this is a covenant which I will make with the House of Israel after those days," that is, after the days of the tribulation, "declares the LORD, I will put My law within them and on their heart. I will write it and I will be their God and they shall be My people." Regeneration, spiritual restoration of the Jewish people will take place at that time because they will have done the thing that they must do, accept Christ as personal savior. The result will be they will have such a relationship spiritually that the knowledge of the Word of God will just pour into them. They'll read the Scriptures, and they'll grasp great and significant concepts. That's indicated in verse 34: "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the LORD, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.'" That is a mighty terrific promise for the Millennial Kingdom. Can you imagine a nation, an earth, in which everybody on the face of the earth knows spiritual principles? And of course when the millennium begins every single one of them is born again and will be regenerated, and they'll all begin the millennial thousand-year kingdom in that wonderful status. You won't have to go around teaching people the Word of God. They'll all be absorbing it like a sponge. Everybody you deal with in that era will be totally different from the people you deal with now. Every government will be completely oriented in every nation to Jesus the King ruling from Jerusalem. And those principles that He upholds and reflect Him, His character, is what will govern the world.

**New Life-New Covenant-New Life Priorities**

The problem that Nicodemus faced, which is a problem which any unbeliever faces today, is found summed up in Philippians 3:8-9. Philippians 3:8-9, start at verse 7. Paul says, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ." I'm making a list of things that characterize "agape" type Christians in order to help us to identify a little more of what we are and not kid ourselves over against those who are "Phile" Christians, who just are fond of the LORD, they like Him, but they're not going to go to the mat for Him. They're not going to wake up in the morning and say, what do You want me to do this day dear Lord? Paul says anything I have gained in worldly goods, that I counted as loss in my life for the sake of Christ.' So the richer you are, the worse off you are in terms, potentially, for what is good for the cause of Christ doesn't have to be; it's what you do with it from then.

In verse 8, "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ." Now that people is an "agape" Christian. This is a Christian that will sacrifice, put himself down for the Lord, withhold nothing. All he has to know is here is what God wants me to do. Here's what the work of the Lord needs, and I can do it. I have the means; I have the talent; I have the time, and I'll do it. The apostle Paul says my life is centered on Christ. You see what he said?... My Lord,... Christ Jesus, my Lord.

**The Basis of Truth**

In verse 9, Philippians 3:9, "and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own," which is what Nicodemus said, "derived from the Law," which is what Nicodemus had, "but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith." What Nicodemus had was human righteousness. He was a real do-gooder. He took the Mosaic Law very seriously. He obeyed it. He was true and faithful to its commandments and its moral code, but he didn't have absolute righteousness. Because there's only one way you get that and that is by the thing he didn't understand, what it is to be born again, how to be regenerated from spiritual death to spiritual life. So Jesus tries to make clear to Nicodemus that he should pay close attention to what is being told him for the simple reason that the Lord Jesus Christ speaks with authority.

**Not Man's Authority but God's Authority**

This again is the problem today. Where does Christ speak now? In the Bible! Where does our Father speak now? In the Bible! Where does the Holy Spirit direct us? What is the base upon which He directs us? It's all in the Bible! And therefore you have to take the position that the Bible is true or not true.

I had an article given to me recently from one of the local newspapers of a pastor, who goes around holding conferences. What he teaches people is not to be enslaved to what the Bible says but to create their own theology, to work out their own theology, what they're comfortable with, what they like to believe, and to create their own God. He says he's fired his God several times and hired a new one. I mean, it's kind of creepy to read that. It's so blasphemous; but people come and listen to him, and they fill his offering plates. What he's telling people "Let your Sin Nature be your guide.' That's what he's telling them. Let your Sin Nature be your guide and your religious beliefs. Well, anybody who takes that man seriously is going to find, and those who follow him are going to find, he didn't know what he's talking about.

Jesus was trying to tell Nicodemus, "Nicodemus, I've been there at the seat of authority. I am more than a man. While I'm here on this earth in a physical way, I am up in heaven right now in My omnipresence as deity. Therefore, this may be a hard thing for you and puzzling to understand, but you need to work your way through it."

Back in John 3:11, Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know and bear witness of that which we have seen, and you do not receive our witness." The Lord Jesus Christ was not another ritualist or another religious leader telling people what their itching ears wanted to hear. This was not somebody who had a touch of truth and a mountain of spiritual ignorance.

John 12:48-50, Jesus says, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My saying, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment, what to say, and what to speak." See, the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity did not initiate what He was teaching people. He was not giving them His opinions. He was giving them that which God the Father told Him to give. He worked through the Scriptures, and in His humanity He had to learn it, He had to study it, He had to prepare His presentations and His Homilies, His teaching sessions. But He knew what He was talking about because He was in direct touch with God the Father in Heaven and had communication with Him. Now, the Pharisees all went negative on the doctrine that Jesus was presenting to them, particularly on salvation by faith in Christ, recognizing him as Messiah Savior. Grace was not the way they wanted to go.

**Only Salvation can Bring Understanding to Scripture**

So then in John 3:12, Jesus says, "If I told you earthly things," this is a first class conditions, and He did. "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe," and they did not, "how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" They didn't believe the earthly analogies that Jesus was making and that He was giving to them about regeneration, and He was telling Nicodemus, 'you're falling into the same trap as your colleagues. I'm giving you earthly examples and parables, and you won't believe them. How do you think you're going to be able to believe what is behind those illustrations, those analogies, those parables, the real spiritual meaning; if you do not accept regeneration, you can't understand the point of the Bible.' Anybody who is not saved, cannot understand Scripture from the point of salvation.

I talked with another Christian recently, and this Christian is a serious student of the Bible. And I was telling this person at this particular place that the study of the Bible, one of things that is done here at Berean church, is a great thing. That it is a lifeline to God because it explains more than just the simple stories; it also explains what is in depth in there. And she used a couple of illustrations. Then the lady to whom we were speaking said that she was a practicing Catholic. Now, what did I think at that point? And what do you think should be done? Zip. The conversation ceased the direction in which it was going. I'm standing there talking to her about the Bible because I assumed that this was a Christian. Now, all of a sudden, I realize this person doesn't have the foggiest notion of what I'm talking about as courteously as she's sitting there listening. If she is a practicing Catholic, she is unsaved because she believes the doctrine of salvation by works. Therefore, she is doomed to the Lake of Fire. She is not regenerated. She is in Nicodemus' position, and she cannot understand anything out of the Bible, let alone the deep things of the Word of God. But she can understand one thing, and I hope all your minds are clicking and telling me mentally, (because I can receive mental communications, which is why the service is always interesting to me), 'There's one thing God the Holy Spirit will tell her, will make clear to her, and that's where in John 16, Jesus says, 'I will send the Holy Spirit, and that Holy Spirit will substitute for your dead human spirit, your unregenerated human spirit, and the Holy Spirit will suddenly make it clear to you what your lost condition is relative to sin; the deadly sin of unbelief in Christ, righteousness- your lack of absolute righteousness as exemplified by Me, and third, judgment-that Christ on the cross paid for your judgment. He covered your sins, and there is nothing for you to do. Satan's grasp upon you has been defeated. That's the only thing that an unsaved person will ever be able to really understand of the deep things of the Spirit of God. And you must be very sensitive when you speak to people about salvation, that you do not carry on conversations with the unbeliever about how they could get all those animals on the Ark and all the other things that interest them, because they are Satan's way of diverting you from the fact that this person needs one thing. And that one thing is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be born again spiritually.

**The Mechanics of Regeneration**

So here are the mechanics of regeneration in John 3:13-15, "And no one has ascended into Heaven, but He who descended from Heaven, even the Son of Man." If Nicodemus is to believe Jesus Christ, he has to first accept the unique position of authority of the God-Man. Christ is more than just an ordinary rabbi. He is physically here on earth as the only sinless perfect man since Adam, but He is also at the same time in Heaven in His omnipresence as deity. He is the God-Man, and there hasn't been anybody who ascended into Heaven but He that descended from Heaven, even the Son of Man. No man at this point had ascended into Heaven. Jesus Christ was the first one after the resurrection. No one had ascended into the fully glorified body, which could only come after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A couple were there on temporary hold, but this was the grace of God for favored individuals. Jesus Christ claims that He came down from Heaven, and that He is still in Heaven while He is on earth. He descended in the incarnation, and then He ascended after the resurrection. This name the Son of Man, you may remember as we have pointed out to you, comes from the Book of Daniel. And in Daniel, the words 'Son of Man' refers to the Messiah. It's a term for deity, and it was a reference to the coming God-Man. No one has ascended into Heaven, but He who descended from Heaven, namely the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. So 'Son of Man' stresses His humanity while recognizing His omnipresence in Heaven.

So Nicodemus is faced with the fact that he must trust in the spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the cross as payment for his sin, and the Lord pointed that out in verses 14-15. That is the only way when Nicodemus says, 'How can this be, how can a spiritually dead person with a dead human spirit be brought alive?' Jesus says, John 3:14, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of Man be lifted up;" Since Jesus Christ has not yet gone to the cross at this point in time in this conversation, the Lord used an Old Testament illustration (familiar to Nicodemus, familiar to all of us), to explain what was necessary for the new birth - Jesus Christ lifted up on the cross, bearing the moral guilt of all mankind. Jesus bearing the moral guilt of all mankind is the basis by which this terrible block of the Old Sin Nature creating spiritual death is demolished. Regeneration is what picks off that particular block.

**Whoever Believes!**

Now, since Christ has paid for the sins of all those who believe this fact are born again spiritually. They are regenerated by the Holy Spirit from Sin's fatal bite. That's what Jesus pointed out in verse 15, "That whoever believes may in Him have eternal life." Whosoever believes...and you see what it is again? "Believes,"... not make him your Lord and Savior. That's backwards. Whosoever trusts in Him. Simple believing! That's how you receive Christ as we showed you this morning. You cannot receive Him unless you believe in His name. His name means savior. So it's trusting in the one who has paid the price.

What the Israelites did was they just believed God here on this experience when they were being punished by God for their idolatry again. So they put up the serpent, the grass serpent up on the pole, and they were told that whoever looks at the serpent will be healed, will be saved from death. Some did. Many were too occupied with their agonies, their aches and pains, and their horrific condition right then, and they did not. The Israelites, you'll notice, did just one thing. They looked at the brass serpent and did that as an expression of their belief in the Word of God that had come to them through Moses, ' I will save you from death if you look at that serpent up there on the pole.' They didn't have to work to be saved. They didn't have to pray to be saved. They didn't have to agonize to be saved. They didn't have to come forward in a meeting to be saved. They didn't have to plead with God to save them. They didn't have to promise to be nice for the rest of their life to be saved. They didn't have to join up, or they didn't have to pay up. They didn't do anything. They just looked at the serpent, and they were healed. They looked at the serpent, and they were removed from the position of death.

The basis of the new birth is the death of Jesus Christ alone. That is the way that terrible barrier block has been removed. In 1 Peter, 1:18-21, Peter says, "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believing in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." Your faith and hope are in something that only God Himself has done. It is through the work of God, through Christ, that you can have spiritual regeneration.

In John 6:47, the Lord says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life" – no Lordship Salvation, no promise to deliver a good life, no promise of anything, for God to save you. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life."

**Only Through Grace**

Then the chilling verse for all the religions of the world, John 14:6, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'" So, how do you remove the spiritual death problem that we receive because we have a sin nature by the act of divine regeneration. How is that achieved? By trusting in Christ as personal savior. The moment you receive Him, God the Holy Spirit brings you back to life spiritually, and where you had a dead human spirit, you now have a live human spirit, a live soul, and a live body. All of this is on the basis of a grace plan, something provided entirely by God alone. Whose idea was this? John 1:13, "who were born out of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God." This is not a human thing that brought you into regeneration. The grace plan of salvation, of regeneration, it was God the Father's plan. He is the one who instituted it.

James 1:18 also points this out. James 1:18, "In the exercise of his will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among his creatures." Who has done that? God the Father. Who provided the plan? The plan was provided by God the Son.

Going on in our passage in John 3, the famous Scripture of John 3:16, we had this pointed out that is the Son of God who provided the salvation. He paid the price to demolish this block. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Please remember that the word only begotten is a technical term for "the Unique Son." Only begotten means there is not another one like Him. He's the only one in that category.

John 3:17, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him." The only thing that keeps someone from being saved is lack of faith in Christ.

Then in John 3:18, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." We cannot read these verses and think about some of the relatives we have without having a twinge of grief, because we have relatives who are caught up in liberal concepts. Those liberal concepts have at their heart that it is man who does something to be saved. It is not just that he believes in Jesus Christ, you believe in Him... but you also have to live a good life. If you don't live a good life, your salvation is taken away from you. Yet Hebrews says if you have a salvation and it is removed from you for something you have done, and that's how God works, you're in deep trouble, because there's no other sacrifice for sin. Only the sacrifice of Christ could cover sin, and it's been made clear in Hebrews He only died once. You can't sacrifice Him again. So anybody who believes they can lose their salvation should understand that they cannot go to Heaven anymore after that. Forget about it. Just go out and live your loose life if that's what you believe, because you cannot sacrifice Christ again. And He would have to be sacrificed every time in order to cover your sin again. But the Roman Catholics being logical, that's what they do. Every Sunday, they kill the Son of God upon their altar again in a bloodless sacrifice and give Him to you in the form of the bread and wine. So Nicodemus is faced with the fact that salvation comes through the simple procedure of something that the Son has provided. That time was nearly in the future,

The third thing you should know is that the person, who applies this provision, is God the Holy Spirit. In John 3:5-6, which we read, "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water,'" the Word of God, particularly the gospel, "and the Spirit," the Holy Spirit, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, "he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The fact that the Holy Spirit is the one who applies salvation is also pointed out in Titus 3:5. Titus 3:5 says "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." Got it? Washing of the Word of God, the gospel, and by the renewing of your dead human spirit by God the Holy Spirit. That wonderful condition is brought about by God the Holy Spirit.

So the Father planned salvation. The Son provided the basis for salvation, His death on the cross. It is the Holy Spirit who executes salvation in the lives of the elect. What is our part as lost people in all of these? Reformation will not cut it! What God requires of us is regeneration. Reformation is just social betterment. That does not handle the spiritual death brought about by the sin nature.

**Experiences and Works Don't Cut It**

What do you have to do to accept these facts? Have a happy feeling. Get an ecstatic experience. Because if you're not regenerated, then you can kick up a lot of fun with the Old Sin Nature. No, you're ecstatic feelings that will not save you. Well, how about instead of regeneration, how about rituals? How about religious rituals? About practicing crossing yourself? How about dipping your fingers in holy water? How about praying repetitiously Hail Marys or Our Fathers, which is what they do in movies? Here's these poor guys, their bombers down in the middle of the Pacific. They managed to get their rafts out and they're sitting there floating around hoping for somebody to come and see them. And they all say their Our Fathers together, like there's a magic code. Jesus says that's religion, that's ritual. You cannot get regeneration in that way.

**The Seven Wonderful Results of Regeneration**

Let me close this evening by pointing out 7 wonderful things that are the result of regeneration, removal of this terrible block of spiritual death. First of all, obviously, you receive a live human spirit. Now, you have a point of contact with God. Up to then, you do not. 1 Corinthians 15:22, "so also in Christ all shall be made alive." That's the latter part of 15:22b, "in Christ all shall be made alive." Then in Colossians 2:13, "And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh," your Old Sin Nature, "He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions." Obviously these people are physically alive. So when he says he made you alive at a certain point and forgave you all of your sins and transgressions, your moral guilt, he's speaking about coming alive spiritually.

Number two, you are given the life of God. If you're a Christian here tonight, you have the eternal kind of life which God possesses. John 10:28, "and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of my hand." You see, when God says believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved," or John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." He didn't say 6 months. He didn't say a few days. He didn't say until the next time you misbehave morally. He says eternal life. You cannot suddenly treat the Bible as using terms indiscriminately and carelessly. There's only one kind of life which is eternal life, one that can never be terminated. It never ends. So here in this verse 28 is one of those assurances of salvation. Jesus says "My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hands." How's that picture? This hand is Jesus Christ. By faith, you place yourself in His hand. He closes over you and God the Father comes along and puts His hand over the hand of Christ. You've got a double protection. You have to be really stupid to think that God is giving you a salvation which promises eternal life that can be terminated by something that man can do. Yes, you can live very badly. You can live very sinfully. God will deal with you on that matter. But if you're going to be a prodigal son, as prodigal as you may choose to be, you're still a son. You cannot change that.

The third thing is the one we looked at in such detail this morning. John 1:12, and it always makes me mad when I read this verse and remember what's been done with it, "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." How do you receive Him? By believing in His name. What is believing in His name mean? Believing in the name of Jesus Christ, which means savior, salvation.

Another thing you do, you get out of that family that you're born in physically, and you get into a marvelous family, which is the family of God. Because Christ is a king, it is a royal family. Galatians 3:26, "For you are all sons of God through Faith in Christ Jesus." You're sons of God, sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ Jesus. You're in his family.

Number five, you have a wonderful father now. Whatever kind of earthly father you may have, and there are a lot of bad earthly fathers, church people who are not too good fathers, but 2 Corinthians 6:18 says, "'And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' Says the Lord Almighty." When you regenerated, you get a new father in Heaven. Up to then you had an earthly father, and you also had a spiritual father. The earthly father was the one who conceived, who sired you. The spiritual father was Satan. Now that father is replaced by God in Heaven, the creator.

Now, because you're in that family, they give you certain privileges as an adult child to certain features that belong to that family; what that family owns, what that family is. So, No.6, you become a joint heir with Jesus Christ. Romans 8:16-17, "The spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him." Now, you could spend a lot of time. We could have very happy testimony meeting here tonight at this point, reminding ourselves of what is ours as heirs of God, all of the things that belong to Jesus Christ, that now on the humanity level belong to us also. Now, that is a great heritage. That's why the Bible says don't live your life looking on these things below, but live your life looking up there for the glory which is to come. I heard of a man, who walking down the sidewalk one day, found a 10 dollar bill. He grabbed it up with great glean, was delighted to have it, but he never saw another sunset. After that, his eyes were always on the road below. He never looked up again and saw a magnificent sky.

Number 7, unbelievable as it is, you have been made a new creature, a new creation in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man is in Christ," born again, regenerated spiritually, "he is a new creature;" or a new creation, a new species of human beings is a good way to think of it, "the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." Please don't interpret this as having something to do with your conduct. It does not. This is not a verse to say "Ah hah! I can tell by the way you're acting that you're not a Christian." No, you can't. The old things, are the other things of spiritual death. The old things are the slave market of Satan. The old things are the moral guilt that rests upon you. All of the things that are in this wall that Jesus Christ removed. That's the old things and all that has been removed. You have now been reconciled to a new thing, namely the image of Christ. You once were in the image of Satan. Now you are in the image of Christ. You should act a certain way in consequence of that. But what this verse is saying is that you had been made a new species of human being and only that species will enter Heaven. Are you one?

Our Father, we thank you for this evening's meditation, and we thank you for the fact that regeneration has transformed us from a hopeless destiny in eternity with Satan to a magnificent future with God, our Father. We pray our Father as we leave tonight that we will leave here rejoicing that we took the trouble to be here and that our souls have been fed upon the living and active Word of God. We pray that Thou will help us to perform an act of spiritual sacrifice, the sacrifice of our substance by contributing to the financial needs of Berean Church and to enable us to do Thy work of proclaiming Thy Word through expository preaching. Take us safely to our homes, and we pray Thy blessing upon us in opportunities to go about knowing what we are to do for Thee and to find a happy occasion, that that is what we do. May our lives count for eternity, we pray in Jesus name. Amen. Thank you so much for being with us. We are dismissed. Dr. John E. Danish, 1999

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