

A NEW PERSON

INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday morning this week, we read two verses from our "50 days of the Holy Spirit pamphlet", John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5. Respectively, they say this:

John 3:5-8 (NKJV) Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Titus 3:5 (AMPC) He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but because of His own pity and mercy, by [the] cleansing [bath] of the new birth (regeneration) and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

What jumped out to me was Jesus words, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God". With particular reference to being born of "water". I had never previously taken much note of it because I simply took it as referring to the natural birth. But as I studied it, I found it to be a great source of controversy, where Bible scholars through the ages have interpreted it in one of three ways.

No matter how you interpret it, there is one thing that is a common result of the meaning. I want to look at it today as its an very important part of the whole experience of being born-again.

MESSAGE

EXPLORING THE CONTROVERSY

What does it mean, to be "born of water"?

1. It could simply mean the natural birth.

Jesus was speaking of two births, "unless you are born-again" implies exactly that, to be born-again means that you must have been born once already.

Nicodemus asked Jesus, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" taken literally, Jesus could have simply been referring to our birth in the flesh, and he refers to it being born of the flesh in John 3:6. The second birth would then refer to "birth in the Spirit", which is the re-birth experience.

2. It could refer to water baptism.

There are some denominations that believe that you are not saved until you have been baptized. As a denomination, this is not our own belief. If

we look to Romans 10:9 and see what is required for salvation: **Romans 10:9** (NKJV) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved". There is no reference to water baptism here.

Salvation is by grace and not through works, we cannot say, "I'm saved because I was baptized". But water baptism is a necessary result of being born-again.

3. **It could refer to the Holy Spirit's cleaning work at the time of being born-again**

The "Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary" describes this beautifully: "of water and of the Spirit—A twofold explanation of the "new birth," so startling to Nicodemus. To a Jewish ecclesiastic, so familiar with the symbolical application of water, in every variety of way and form of expression, this language was fitted to show that the thing intended was no other than a thorough spiritual purification by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

As I studied, I could understand the different viewpoints. But God is not a God of confusion. There must be an underlying spiritual truth, and this is what I believe it is:

- Natural birth is not adequate, **SOMETHING MUST CHANGE**, we need to be born-again.
- Water baptism is symbolic of a change – it identifies us with Christ's death, burial and resurrection on the third day, but as we are baptized we make a declaration before witnesses and before God..."**SOMETHING HAS CHANGED IN MY LIFE ! I'm a new person, my old life is over, dead and buried and as I come out of these waters of baptism, I am entering the new life. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me!**".
- When we are washed with the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit **WE ARE CHANGED**", we are no longer dirty, we are a new person.

Regardless of how it's interpreted, one thing stands out, It's the absolute fact that when we are born-again, there needs to be a noticeable change in our lives. When we are born again, we become a new person.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT) So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like Him as **we are changed into His glorious image.**

My first and important challenge to us this morning is this: HAS SOMETHING CHANGED? Has the salvation, re-birth experience brought about a real change in our lives? If not, we need to re-visit our commitment and check if we truly meant it when we gave our hearts to Jesus.

A NEW PERSON

So when we are born-again, something changes in our life, but how do we sustain that change? How do we remain a new person and grow from glory to glory in Christ?... **Through the enabling, empowering, supernatural presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives!**

We cannot invite Jesus Christ into our lives to the exclusion of the Holy Spirit. The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are one. When we invite Jesus into our heart at the experience of being born again, a relationship starts with the complete Godhead, the Triune God, and **God is represented in our lives through the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit.** Let's look what He does when we are born-again:

The Holy Spirit raises us up from spiritual death:

Romans 8:11-13 (NKJV) But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; **but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**

- The Holy Spirit breathes new life into these mortal bodies, giving us immortality, not of the flesh, but of the spirit!
- It is by the Spirit we put to death the old, sinful, fleshly deeds of the body.

The Holy Spirit regenerates us – He makes our lives clean:

Titus 3:5 (AMPC) He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but because of His own pity and mercy, **by [the] cleansing [bath] of the new birth (regeneration) and renewing of the Holy Spirit,**

When we accept the atoning work Jesus did for us on the cross, and invite Him to be our Lord and Saviour, our sins are forgiven and paid for. **At the same time something else happens, it's called, "regeneration".** God cleanses us from our sinful nature and makes us a new person through the working of His Holy Spirit in us.

- **In simple terms, the Holy Spirit moves into our life and starts to clean us and renew us – its like taking a soaking bath in the Spirit. He is the water and the soap that makes us completely new!**

Ezekiel 36:25-29a (NKJV) Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I

will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. 28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29 I will deliver you from all your uncleanness.

- The Holy Spirit's power makes me new!
- He washes me and cleanses me.
- He takes that stony heart and gives us a new heart that is open to the Lord.
- He renews us in our spirit man.
- He helps us and causes us to walk in obedience to God's word.
- He is the one that delivers us from all our uncleanness.
- Then we live as God's people, totally renewed and totally changed!

God does all the work to give us new life and make us a new person.

Have we surrendered and allowed His Spirit to perform His renewing work in us? Have we taken the Holy Spirit seriously?

Is all that we are interested in, the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit or do we realise how important a role He plays in our lives?

A NEW FAMILY

When a baby is born, it becomes part of a family. You could say, "There is a new person in that family". That new person receives love, nurturing, teaching and mentorship as people help them to grow into an adult. If they are part of a healthy family, they develop a sense of belonging.

It's the same when we are born-again into God's family. If our commitment is real, the angels in heaven will testify that there is a "NEW PERSON" in God's family. The Holy Spirit plays a key role in this:

Romans 8:14-17 (NKJV) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

- Not only are we a new person, but we are part of God's family.
- God Himself nurtures, comforts, teaches us, helps us and mentors us through the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit.
- We were once in bondage to fear – fear of spiritual death, fear as a result of sin, even fear of God because of our sinful nature, but now, the bondage is broken and in its place we have freedom and adoption into God's family.

- The Holy Spirit helps us to embrace this new person that we are by enabling us to see God as our Father and we cry "Abba, Father", meaning "Daddy, Father".
- When the enemy comes and tries to tell us we are not part of God's family and we are not a NEW PERSON, the Holy Spirit gives us assurance through His very presence that we are children of God. We are His heirs.

Is there doubt in your mind that you are a NEW PERSON and that you are part of GOD's FAMILY? The Holy Spirit in you is evidence and a seal of God's presence and love for you.

CONCLUSION

If you had a car with the engine that was ready for the grave, and you decided to put a new engine in it. If when you get that car back, it still gives problems, you would probably start to wonder if the old engine really had been replaced or just cleaned up. It is not different with our new lives in Christ, when we are born again, we have a new life, CHANGE must have taken place, we can't just be a little cleaned up.

Jesus said that **we cannot see the kingdom** of God unless we are born again. He also said **we cannot enter the kingdom** of God unless we are born of water and of the Spirit.

This is not just a single event, it's the re-birth and a continual renewing and it is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

That water and the Holy Spirit speaks of a clean life, a life that is cleansed from sin and that is DIFFERENT from our old, sinful, fleshly life.

Has SOMETHING CHANGED? Are we living the clean, renewed, regenerated life that is enabled by the Holy Spirit? Have we surrendered and yielded to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives? **If not, we can't enter God's kingdom!**

Do we feel like part of God's family as is our right when we are born-again.

Today can be the day when all the change comes. Let us ask the Lord to have His way in our lives by the power of His Holy Spirit so that we can be that NEW PERSON the re-birth experience results in.