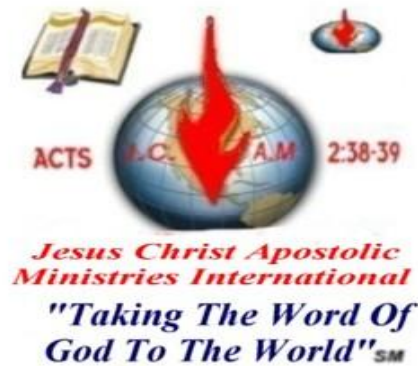


Tract #5



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“Ye Must Be Born Again”

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (John 3:7) "Ye must be born again." Listen to those words of our Lord Jesus. "Ye must be born again." Tell it to sinful men as they struggle in their bondage and try to rise to better things. Proclaim the message to those who are proud of their achievements and who trust in their own strength. "Ye must be born again!"

Nicodemus, one of Israel's wise elders, was greatly puzzled by our Lord's words about the New Birth. When Jesus set before him the necessity of this experience, Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?" This is a question many have asked, but there is a mystery concerning the New Birth which finite minds cannot solve. There are some things which men obtain only by the obedience of faith.

Jesus acknowledged the mystery of the New Birth when he described it to Nicodemus: "The wind blows where it will, and you hear its sound, but you cannot tell from where it comes or where it is going. So is every one that is born of the Spirit" (Jn.3:8).

When Were The Disciples Born Again?

Reader, do you know when Jesus' disciples received an experience such as Jesus described to Nicodemus? At no time during Jesus' earthly ministry did his disciples receive such an experience. Then, when did they receive it? Keep his words "the wind blows where it will" in mind as you read from Acts 2:3-4: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues,

as the Spirit gave them utterance." This experience which the disciples received on Pentecost morning fulfills the description

of the New Birth which Jesus gave to Nicodemus. Evidently, the disciples were born again in the second chapter of Acts. When Jesus spoke of the sound of the wind accompanying every new birth experience, he was obviously not discussing weather

conditions with Nicodemus. As he was wont to do, Jesus was explaining a spiritual truth by using a familiar earthly phenomenon (in this case, the blowing of the wind). In reminding Nicodemus that winds produce discernible sounds, Jesus was saying that "every one who is born of the Spirit" is moved by the Spirit to speak in tongues when it happens.

In this covenant, especially, we live by the Word of God, not by the word of man. Man's own "sound", his own confession of faith, bears no weight in heaven; men can be wrong. It is only the witness of the Spirit which is always true. As his disciple John pointed out, "It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1Jn.5:6b). Paul expressed the

same truth in these words: "The Spirit itself bears witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom.8:16). Please notice that both apostles emphasize the necessity of the Spirit's testimony (speaking in tongues) as the divinely appointed sign that we have indeed received the Spirit of God. It is God's peculiar way of declaring one to be His child. It is the voice of "Him that speaketh from heaven", Whom we must not refuse (Heb.12:25). It is the sound of the ever-moving wind of God.

No man knows another's heart; therefore, the testimony of God's Spirit is the only reliable testimony of true repentance. Listen to Peter's words in Acts: "Men and brethren . . . God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the gospel and believe. And God, Who knows the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the holy Ghost, even as He did unto us" (Acts 15:7-8). And how did Peter and his Jewish companions know that Cornelius and his household had repented and received the holy Ghost? "They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God."

Speaking in tongues when we receive the holy Ghost also makes it possible for unbelievers to know who has received God's Spirit. Many claim to be of God and to be in possession of His Spirit; therefore, "tongues are for a sign," Paul affirmed, "to them that believe not" (1Cor. 14:22). How the love of God is revealed in this! He desires those outside His kingdom to be able to find it!

At the last supper, Jesus described the spiritual condition of those who followed him but had not yet received the Spirit: "A woman when she is in travail has sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And you now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again [in spirit, at Pentecost], and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (Jn.16: 21-22). By comparing his disciples' spiritual condition that night with a woman agonizing with the pangs of childbirth, Jesus was saying that the time for their New Birth was near. The disciples had been conceived by the Word of God which Jesus had sown

into their hearts, and now they were nearing the hour of their spiritual birth at Pentecost. They were no longer of the world (Jn.17:14); at the same time, however, they were not yet "in Christ" (Jn 17:21). They were "clean" under the Law (Jn.15:3), but they were not sanctified (Jn.17:17,19). As much as their lives had been changed by Jesus, their greatest transformation was yet to come.

Conception Is Not Birth

Nature itself teaches us that no birth can occur without a seed first being sown. This is true whether one is speaking naturally or spiritually. Nowhere, even in the kingdom of God, is there a birth without the sowing of a seed. Spiritually, "the seed is the Word of God" (Lk.8: 11). One must receive this Seed in order for the process of New Birth to begin. In addition to this universal truth, nature also teaches us that relatively few of the seeds sown will produce life, and that even fewer will mature and bear fruit. According to Jesus, only a small portion of the seeds of the kingdom of God which are sown into human hearts actually sprout, or produce righteousness in the life. Sometimes, he said, when one hears the Word (Seed) and receives it, "the wicked one catches away that which was sown in his heart" (Mt.13:19). The Word of God was sown

into the hearts of many thousands during Jesus' earthly ministry, yet only about 120 followers continued in his Word and were born again at the first outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Many ministers mistake the receiving of the Seed to be the New Birth. They think that receiving the Word of God and repenting of sin is the same as being born again. But cessation from evil - good as that is - is not the New Birth. Repentance neither atones for nor washes away sins; sins are washed away only by the Spirit, when it baptizes us into the body of Christ (1Cor.12:13; Acts 22:16). Only by entering into Christ do we become new, spiritually clean creatures.

The Samaritans, for one example, gladly received the Word that Philip preached (Acts 8:5-8); still, the washing away of their sins was not accomplished until later, after news of Philip's preaching reached Jerusalem: "Now when the apostles

which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Ghost. (For as yet it had fallen upon none of them. . . .) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-17). So, as the Samaritans' experience demonstrates, being convicted of sin and turning from it is only the first step toward the

New Birth. Tragically, many fail to continue in the Word after being convicted by it. Consequently, they never receive the baptism of the holy Ghost; they are never born again. Such people, and there are millions of them in Christianity around the world, must be warned that incomplete surrender is no better than none at all. God gives His Spirit only to those who obey

Him (Acts 5:32); therefore, our first priority must be to know God's will and to do it - not only to receive the baptism of Christ, but to obtain the promised salvation at the end of the way. "Let no man deceive you by any means", my friend; no one will be saved without receiving the holy Ghost and obeying it (1Pet.3:21; Mk.16:16; Rom.8:14). Regardless of anyone's standing among religious men, he has no part in the kingdom of God without His Spirit.

Spiritual Harlotry

I do not diminish the importance of conviction (conception) - who could be born without it? - but we must understand its purpose. Being conceived is good, but it can only be appreciated by those who are born. And how much better than the conception is the birth of a child! This is God's heart, but it is not the heart of one who has the spirit of a harlot. She dreads the thought of bearing a child, though she earns her living by performing the act which should produce the conception of one - just as multitudes of Christian ministers hate the thought of anyone being baptized with the holy Ghost and speaking in tongues, though

they earn their living by "preaching the Word" - the religious act which should lead sinners to the holy Ghost life. Such men love to see the Word convict and change a sinful life; they rejoice when many respond to their

"altar call"; they study; they build; they give; they pray; they cross land and sea to make converts; but all their religious activity is no more in God's sight than the cheap perfume of a streetwalker plying her ungodly trade if the result is not life in the Spirit! The act of sowing the seed is there, but to what end?

In spite of the claims of Christians, the way of Christ Jesus found in the New Testament is not the beginning of Christianity; rather, it is the way of life which Christianity has historically opposed with all its worldly power; and it will continue to oppose that true faith until that Whore and her "daughters" are destroyed. Yes, the great Whore in John's

Revelation is Christianity (Catholicism), and the harlots to whom she gave birth are the faiths (Protestants) which departed from her. Christianity is that religion which worships the Lord Jesus, but not in spirit and in truth. It arose as a religion after the days of the apostles, and it corrupted the right ways of God. It is a religion which to this day rewards men for sowing the Seed, even as its carnal forms of worship and UN ordained doctrines abort the very spiritual life which that Seed produces.

Yes, by leading sinners convicted by the Word to do religious works and to believe doctrines which are not of God, Christian ministers abort the good work which their own seeds may have started! By resisting the truth and power of the Spirit, ministers themselves turn what should have been a wonderful gift of God, the sowing of the Seed of Christ, into a vain religious enterprise. It is true that God has blessed some Christians with wonderful spiritual blessings, but every holy gift with which God blesses those who remain in Christianity is destined to wither, because the spirit of Christianity is the spirit of death. God has precious children now who are anointed but who have not obeyed His call to "Come out from among them." Watch them. In time their gifts will wither. Christianity will drain the life out of their work.

Who Has Repented?

When a truly hungry soul hears the Word of God, a wonderful change begins to take place, a change wrought by the love and power of God. As one begins to feel the life of the Spirit, his countenance and behavior is altered. And if he continues in the Word, not allowing the wicked one to steal the Seed from his heart, the day will come when the Lord will baptize him with the holy Spirit. He will come out of the womb, to be numbered among the saints! Jesus encouraged us not to doubt this when he said, "Every one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness shall be filled"!

The experience of New Birth is sometimes illustrated by the process by which a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. First, there is the worm, hairy and ugly, crawling in the dust. Then one day that worm wraps itself in a cocoon. There it remains for a time, and then, on a warm day, that cocoon bursts asunder and a beautiful butterfly emerges, no more to crawl as a worm in the dust, but to ride upon the wind and to nestle in the hearts of flowers. A sinner, convicted of his sin by the Word of

God, wraps himself in the cocoon of God's love and protection. His changing, developing life becomes a mystery to those on the outside. Old companions call him strange. But when the Spirit of God enters, he becomes a son of God, born to rise to heavenly places in Christ.

Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk.13:3). No one who believes the truth will deny this. All who do not repent will surely perish. On the other hand, what is promised to all who do repent? "Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye

shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Despite these words, multitudes claim that they have repented and been baptized in the name of Jesus, but they have not received the baptism of the holy Spirit. How is that possible? If one can repent, yet not receive the holy Spirit (contrary to the Word by Peter), then one can refuse to repent, yet be saved in the end (contrary to the Word by Jesus). If God's Word in Luke 13:3 to all who do not repent stands sure, then God's Word in Acts 2:38 to all who do repent stands sure.

Every one who repents will receive the holy Ghost, God's promise of eternal life. Every one who does not repent will not receive the holy Ghost and will not be saved in the end. That is the simple truth, my friend; and the truth is destined to prevail over all the doctrines of man, regardless of how many of us may give to those doctrines a hearty "Amen".