



## African Post 27

12-19-24

## NEW BIRTH (Part 4)

Good morning. I trust you are having a pleasant Christmas season. And I trust today's Post will reinforce the message of Jesus in this season.

We have talked about New Birth the last three weeks. We have focused on this topic in part because most people we know are not born again: many are outside the church and some are inside.

An active member of a local church who is not born again is in a very dangerous place. Since they are religiously active and speak 'church language' they may never be asked, "Have you been born again?" And even if someone asks, they may mistakenly answer, "Yes," thinking that being religious means they are born again.

But if we accept Jesus' statements to Nicodemus as true, then being a good person, doing good works, even being a church leader will not get you into heaven.

Jesus specifically says: "You MUST be born again."

Those who are born again are a new creation. They are indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus. They are something different. They are something radically new.

### THIS IS THE NEW IDENTITY OF THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS :

They are-

- Adopted sons of God (who live in obedience and friendship with Him). **Galatians 4:5**; and **Romans 8:23**
- New citizens of the kingdom of God (a kingdom that at the present is only partially revealed); and we are to be seated in the heavenlies with the resurrected and glorified Jesus (with constant access to God in prayer). **Ephesians 1:19-21**; and **2:19**
- Sealed by the Spirit of God (marked by God for salvation on The Day of the Lord). **Ephesians 4:30**; **2 Timothy 2:19**; and **Revelation 7:2-3**
- Ambassadors for Christ Jesus (with authority to evangelize and minister in Jesus' name). **2 Corinthians 5:20**
- A miniature temple who houses the Holy Spirit. **1 Corinthians 3:16-17**; and **6:17**

Paul speaks of this transformation into a new identity in **Ephesians 2 :4-10**:

*<sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions —it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

But this is more than an individual experience. This is also a community experience.

Paul continues in Ephesians 2 to explain that God has transformed us in order for us to be functional members of his unique People:

**Ephesians 2:14-** *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup> by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. <sup>17</sup> He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

Notice who Paul says we are:

- Citizens with God's People
- Members of God's Household
- A functional part of God's Holy Temple where God lives by his Spirit.
- (Paul adds in **1 Corinthians 12-14** that we are "Members of The Body of Christ".)

Peter also speaks of the corporate identity we have as new creations in Christ Jesus:

**1 Peter 2:9-** *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

Notice who Peter says we are:

- A Chosen People
- A Royal Priesthood
- A Holy Nation (literally a unique ethnic group)
- God's special Possession – living in the Light
- God's People – the beneficiaries of God's mercy.

There is much, much more to the transformed life. In the meantime,

- I hope you are experiencing this transformed life.
- I hope you are growing and maturing in this transformed life.
- I hope you are encouraging everyone you know to enter and mature into this Jesus style of true Life.

Blessings to you in Christ -

*Douglas*

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