

# Discipleship Class

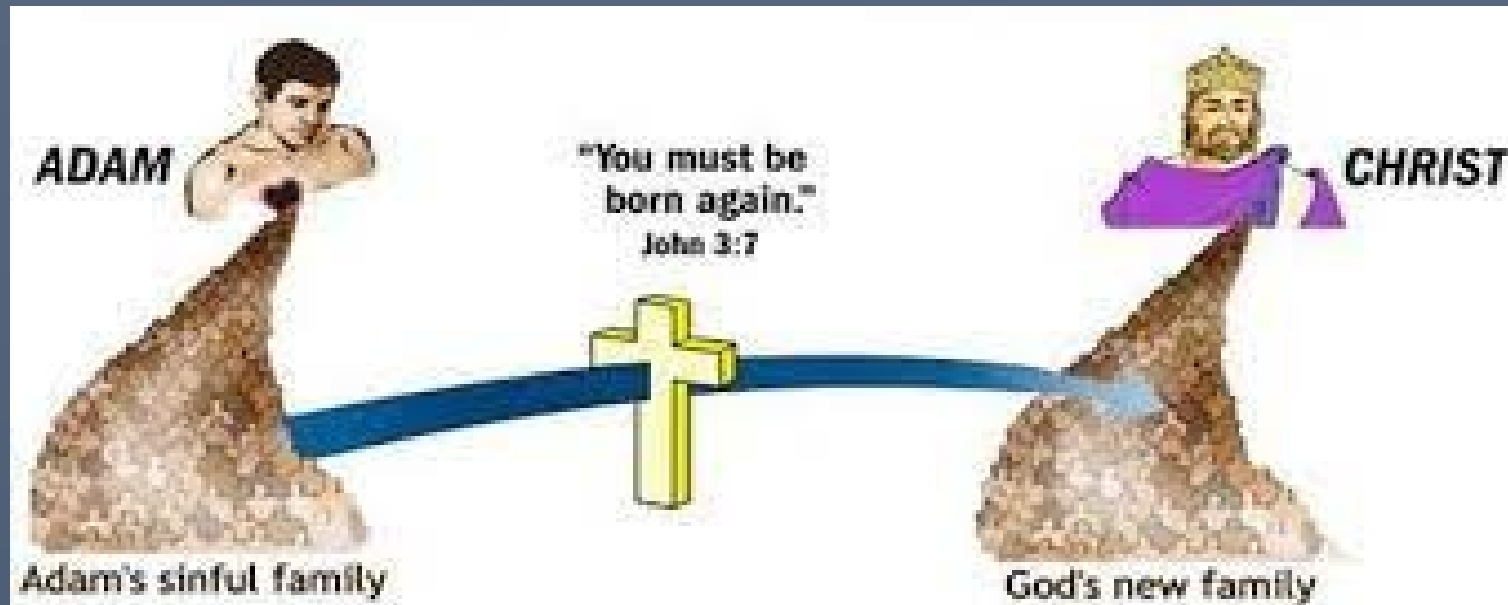
Becoming Christ's Disciple

Lesson One: The New Birth

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# The New Birth

Here is how it works



# What we Believe

“We believe that salvation is obtained by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus.

This salvation is received through repentance and submission to Jesus as Savior and Lord (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:1-16; Romans 10:11; Titus 3:4-7)

At the end of this lesson, we will be able to:

- Explain what the new birth really is and what it is not.
- Understand the nature of the new birth.
- Appreciate why the need exists for a new birth experience.
- Comprehend God’s role as the author of the new birth.
- Explain how one can know that they have experienced the new birth.

# I. Introduction

The new birth is the state of being born again. It was necessitated by the Fall in the Garden of Eden.

Read Genesis 2:16-17.

Since Adam and Eve disobeyed God and partook from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they died spiritually. The communion that existed between humans and God ceased to exist.

The new birth is the restoration of communion between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God as experienced by Adam and Eve before the fall in the Garden of Eden.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.....”(John 3:6-8).

# II. Understanding the New Birth

In essence, when humanity fell into sin, we needed to be saved, re-born, or restored unto the Father. This process involved Him and us that is why salvation needs to be considered from two viewpoints—the divine and the human. God's work is to regenerate, to justify, to sanctify, and ultimately to glorify. Our responsibility is to believe, accept and repent.

This act of being saved or brought back into fellowship with God is sometimes also referred to as regeneration. Some theologians also call it the "new birth," or "birth from above" (John 3:3).

Regeneration is likened unto a spiritual resurrection (Ephesians 2:1; John 5:24).

Resurrection is outside man's ability. No corpse can quicken itself.

# II. Understanding the New Birth

Because regeneration is the work of God, it is a miraculous thing.

The new birth is no mere outward reformation, no mere turning over a new leaf and endeavoring to live a better life.

It is a supernatural operation of God upon man's spirit.

It is a transcendent wonder and a marvel of divine grace, wisdom and beauty.

It is a miracle which is being repeated all around us every day.

# II. Understanding the New Birth

Because regeneration is the work of God, it is a mysterious thing. All God's works are shrouded in impenetrable mystery.

The existence and Being of God transcend the finite grasp. Our Lord Himself declared that the new birth was a thing of mystery, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). The wind is something about which the most learned scientists know next to nothing. Its nature, the laws which govern it, its causation—all lie beyond the purview of human inquiry. It is the same with the new birth; it is profoundly mysterious.

# II. Understanding the New Birth

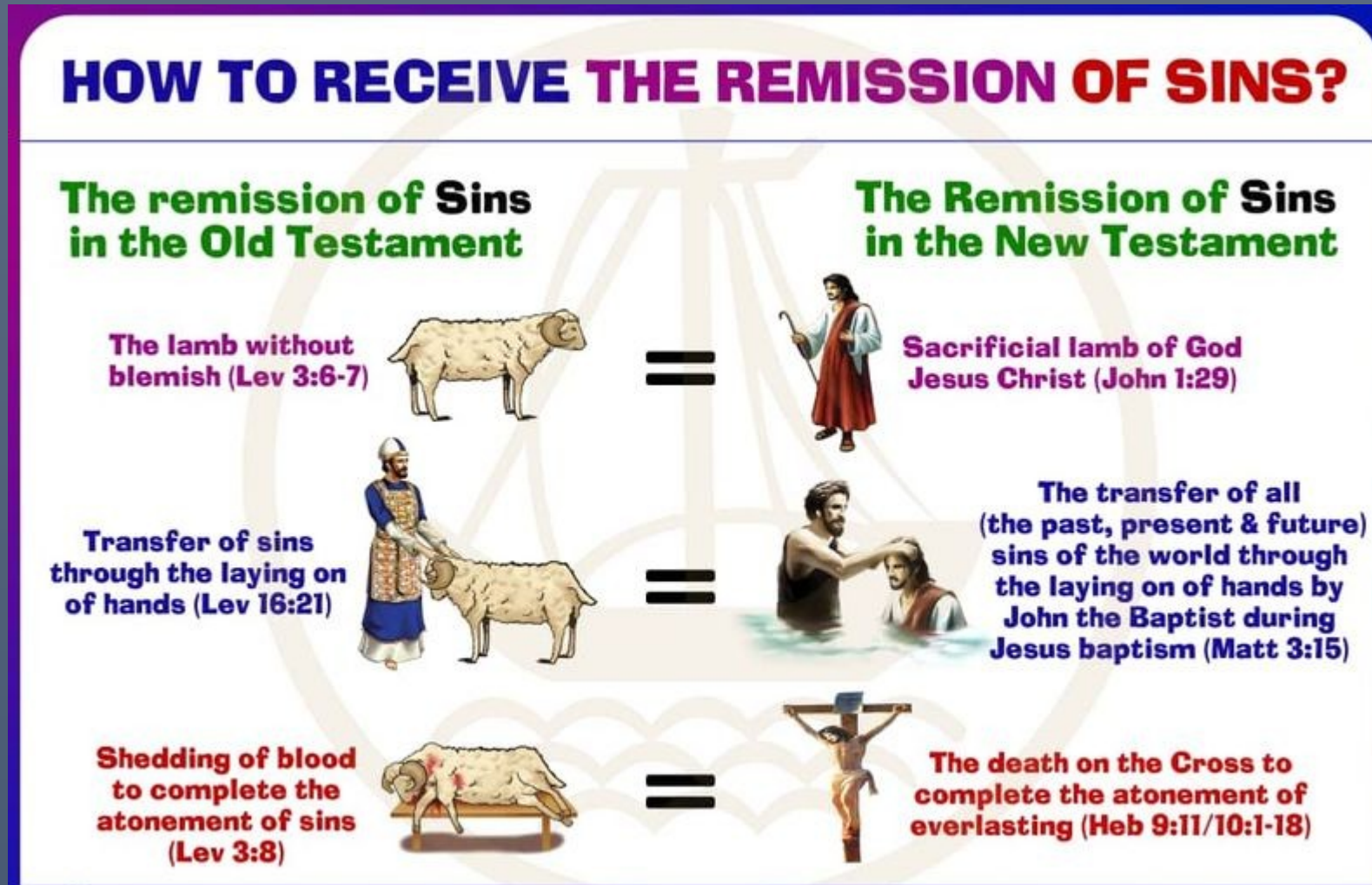
Regeneration is an intensely solemn thing. The new birth is the dividing line between Heaven and hell. In God's sight there are but two classes of people in this world—those who are dead in sins, and those who are walking in newness of life. In the physical realm, there is no such thing as being between life and death. A man is either dead or alive.

We are either sinners or saints; spiritually alive or spiritually dead; children of God or children of Satan. In view of this solemn fact, how momentous is the question, "Have I been born again?"

If you die in your present condition, the day is coming when you will wish that you had never been born at all. Let's consider:



# II. Understanding the New Birth



# A. The nature of the New Birth

What is the new birth? What is the fundamental difference between one who is dead in trespasses and sins, and one who has been quickened together with Christ? Various are the answers returned to these questions; confusing and contradictory are the thoughts often entertained upon this subject.

The effects of the new birth are frequently confounded with the new birth itself. Lack of knowledge concerning God's answer to these questions has often caused regenerated persons to doubt whether or not they have actually passed from death unto life. In considering the nature or character of the new birth we shall deal first with what it is not.

# B. It is not Reformation.

The New Birth is not a process of reformation.

- Reformation is the work of man; regeneration is the work of God.
- Reformation is the attempt to eliminate evil from the old nature; regeneration is the impartation of a new nature.
- Reformation aims to earn salvation by our own efforts; regeneration is due to the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit.

# B. It is not Reformation.

The New Birth is not a process of reformation.

- Reformation seeks to improve the old creation; regeneration is the bringing into existence of an entirely new creation.
- Reformation is external; regeneration is internal. Reformation is turning over a new leaf; regeneration is the beginning of a new life.
- Reformation is a tedious and protracted process; regeneration is instantaneous and complete. In short, reformation is human; regeneration is divine.

## C. It is not the purification of the heart.

Regeneration is not a “change of heart” as we often hear or teach. This is misleading. A “change of heart” is an expression nowhere to be found in the Holy Scriptures even though the concept is implied in a few scriptures. Regeneration does not change the heart, though it results in a radical change of life.

In Jeremiah 17:9 we read, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” The word which is here rendered “desperately” is usually translated “incurably,” and ought to be so here. The heart is never changed for it is incurably wicked.

## C. It is not the purification of the heart.

John 3:6 sets forth the same truth, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and it never becomes anything else.

There is no process by which a horse can be developed from a tree. Neither does a son of Adam ever develop into a son of God.

**Regeneration is not a process of transformation. It is altogether a new creation.**

D. It involves the impartation of God's divine nature.

Regeneration is neither the changing of anything in man, nor the removal of anything from man. It is the implanting of an entirely new nature within man.

Birth in the spiritual realm is precisely what it is in the physical—it is the gateway of life, the starting point of a new existence. Everything that is born partakes of the nature of its parents.

That which is born of the vegetable is vegetable, animal is animal; born of man is human; that which is born of God is divine. Like always begets like. This fundamental law is expressly stated and reiterated on the front is piece of divine Revelation.

## D. It involves the impartation of God's divine nature.

In the first chapter of Genesis, we read no less than nine times that each order of creation brought forth after its own kind.

The herbs of the field brought forth after its kind. The fowl of the air brought forth after its kind. The fish in the sea brought forth after its kind.

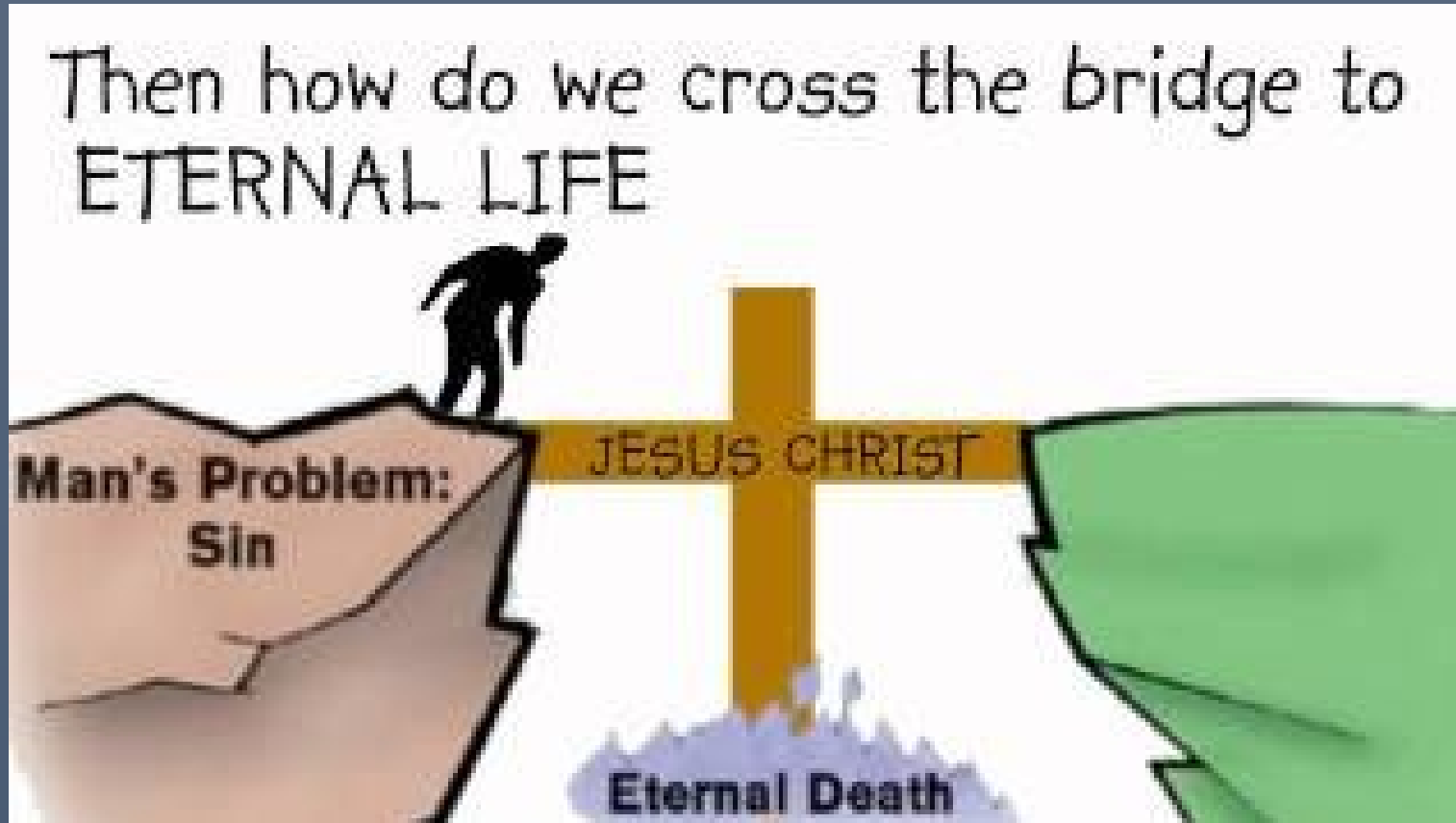
Here is God's refutation of the infidel theory of evolution. Those begotten of God are the children of God.

When we are born again, born of God, we are made partakers of the divine nature just as really and actually as we were made partakers of the human nature at our first birth. Regeneration, then, is the reception of a new nature, a spiritual nature.

Regeneration is the very life of God Himself, communicated to the human spirit. Regeneration gives us a place in the family of God by means of a spiritual birth.



# The Need for the New Birth



# III. The Need of the New Birth.

The new birth is an absolute necessity. It is something for which there is no substitute. None can enter the Kingdom of God, save those who have been born again.

That the new birth is an imperative necessity is clear from the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, you must be born again” (John 3:7).

He did not say, “You may be born again,” or “You ought to be born again,” but “You must be born again.”

# III. The Need of the New Birth.

Nowhere else did Jesus Christ put a single statement so strongly or insist upon it with such emphatic repetition.

Said He, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” And again, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.”

And yet again, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, you must be born again” (John 3:3, 5-7).

# III. The Need of the New Birth.



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On other occasions, He threw wide open the door of mercy when He said, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” But here He deliberately bars the gate of Heaven against all the unregenerate.

Hence, His words to Nicodemus become the more solemn when we remember that they fell from the lips of the One who never excluded a single soul from eternal blessedness unless truth compelled Him to do so. It is none other than the Son of God who says, “You must be born again.”

**But why is the new birth an imperative necessity?** Why is it that no unregenerated person can either see or enter the kingdom of God?

# A. We are spiritually dead.

The new birth is a necessity because by nature, man is spiritually dead. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

On the day that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit he died spiritually and we with him. A person who is spiritually dead cannot beget a child who possesses spiritual life. By natural descent we enter this world “dead in trespasses and sins” and in consequence “alienated from the life of God” (Ephesians 2:1; 4:18).

This is no figure of speech, but a solemn fact. Every child which is born into this world enters it entirely destitute of a single spark of spiritual life. Therefore, dead person cannot see or enter God’s kingdom.

We are devoid of spiritual life from birth, and if ever we are to enter the kingdom of God, which is the realm of spiritual life, we must be born into it.

## B. The Spiritual Kingdom requires a spiritual nature

The new birth is necessary because the Spiritual Kingdom requires a spiritual nature. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

Heaven is the habitation of the thrice Holy God and only those who are holy can dwell in His presence for “without holiness no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

For a man or woman to be happy they must be in harmony with their surroundings. If you were to take several live fish out of the water, place them on a silver salver, carry them into a garden full of fragrant flowers, and were to produce from a harp the sweetest strains of music, those fish would not be happy.

Why? Because they are out of their natural element. They are not in harmony with their environment.

## B. The Spiritual Kingdom requires a spiritual nature.

So, it would be if an unregenerate person were to enter Heaven. He has no faculty for discerning spiritual things; he has no capacity to appreciate the divine glory; he has no power to worship in the beauty of holiness.

An unregenerate person could no more enjoy heaven than could a deaf and dumb man an oratorio.

To take such a person there, would be like leaving a blind man to walk through the halls of our art galleries.



## B. The Spiritual Kingdom requires a spiritual nature.

It is the same in art. Artists are not the product of mechanical training, but the outcome of inherent genius. One cannot be an artist unless one possesses the artistic talent. To be a real mathematician, one must have a mathematical turn of mind. To enter the realm of music, one must be musical.

And to enter the Kingdom of God, one must have a godly or spiritual nature, and the only way to acquire this is by being born again. Hence, “Marvel not that I said to you, you must be born again” (John 3:7).

It is self-evident. It is a logical as well as an imperative necessity. It is a requirement which follows a universal law.

## B. The Spiritual Kingdom requires a spiritual nature.

Take the purest woman to Heaven who has never been regenerated, and she would be miserable.

She cannot really enjoy a spiritual prayer meeting now, much less could she enjoy Heaven.

She prefers the social gathering, the dance, the picture show, and if she is deprived of them, she is discontented, and if she is compelled to spend an hour in the company of godly people, she is wretched.

# C. Man is totally depraved

The Depravity of Mankind will be the focus of our study today

What does it mean?

Is it a biblical concept?

Are we all depraved? If so, why and what can be done to change it?

# C. The Depravity of Humanity

Key Text: Romans 3:10 – 12, 23

- Depravity – Complete deterioration of morals; corruption; perversion.
- We all know people who we would certainly classify as depraved – Adolph Hitler, Ted Bundy, Adi Amin Dada
- Want to look at three men in the Bible who were depraved.

# C. The Depravity of Humanity

## 1. Noah (Genesis 6:5 - 9)

- Told to make ark, take family and animals
- Genesis 6:22 Noah did all that God commanded him
- 2 Peter 2:5 Preacher of righteousness
- Hebrews 11:7 Honored as an example of great faith
- Rained 40 days and 40 nights; water on earth for 150 days; inside ark for a whole year
- Built an altar and offered burnt offerings

# C. The Depravity of Humanity

- Genesis 9:1 God blessed Noah and sons
- Genesis 9:8 God establishes covenant with Noah.
- Genesis 9:20, 21 • Drunkenness, sexual perversion so bad that sons not only shamed by it, but cursed because of it
- Stunned? How can this be? The answer – he was depraved
- Not only did the most righteous man on earth have capability of sin in his heart, he acted upon it and sinned before God

# C. The Depravity of Humanity

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Example: Moses

- Exodus 1-2, Pharaoh commands that all male Hebrew babies killed
- Moses' parents hid him and was found by Pharaoh's daughter
- Educated in ways of Egyptians, probably raised as an heir to the throne in Egypt
- Hebrews 11: 23 – 29 Chose to suffer affliction with God's people than to enjoy the sinful ways of the Egyptians; honored for his great faith
- Numbers 12:3 ----Meekness, most humble man on earth

# C. The Depravity of Humanity

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Example: Moses

- Exodus 2 -----Killed an Egyptian and buried him in the sand
- Numbers 20 Loses temper again, told to speak to rock, says “Shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?”, hits rock twice
- Water came forth abundantly, would you have given water if you were God?
- Result – Moses not allowed to enter promised land
- How can man that was handpicked by God to lead his people commit murder and disobey God so seriously?

Answer: He was depraved.



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# C. The Depravity of Humanity

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Example: David

- 1 Samuel 13:14 Man after God's own heart
- Hand picked by God to be king of Israel
- Great athlete, musician, composer, poet, military leader, Israel's greatest king
- Displays great faith in facing and defeating Goliath
- Displays great restraint in showing mercy to Saul
- Desired to build a temple for God
- Showed mercy to one of Saul's relatives after he became king

# C. The Depravity of Humanity

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Example: David

- Hebrews 11 Honored as an example of great faith
- Jesus Himself called the son of David
- Sound depraved?
- 2 Samuel 11 David commits adultery with Bathsheba, pregnant, David tries to cover it up by making husband drunk in hopes he will lay with his wife, refuses to cooperate, David has him killed
- How can man after God's own heart do this? He was depraved

# C. Man is totally depraved

The New Birth is also an imperative necessity because man is totally depraved.

Every member of Adam's race is a fallen creature, and every part of our complex being has been corrupted by sin.

Our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, our mind is blinded and darkened, and our thoughts are only evil continually.

# C. Man is totally depraved

Without being born again, our reasonings are unsound, affections are prostituted, and our will is alienated from God. We are without righteousness, under the curse of the law, and in bondage to sin and Satan; truly our case is desperate and our condition deplorable.

Of course, we cannot better ourselves, for there dwelleth no good thing in us. We cannot work out our salvation for we are “without strength.”

We need, then, to be born of God. “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation” (Galatians 6:15).

# C. Man is totally depraved

Man is a fallen creature. It is not that a few leaves have faded, but that the entire tree has become rotten, roots and branches. There is in everyone that which is radically wrong.

The word “radical,” comes from a Latin word which means “the root” so that when we say a man/woman is radically wrong, we mean that there is in him or her, in the very root and fiber of their being, that which is intrinsically corrupt and incurably evil.

Sins are merely the fruit.

# C. Man is totally depraved

We sin because we are sinful by nature; we are sinful by nature because we are fallen creatures.

It follows, then, as a natural consequence, that we need the aid of the Holy Spirit to effect a radical change.

There is only One who can affect the change. God created man, and God alone can re-create him.

Hence the imperative demand, “You must be born again.”

# C. Man is totally depraved

- So what?
- Since Jesus never sinned, He never had to die
- Since He was not guilty, He didn't have to be punished
- Instead of going about His business and watching everyone else living in depravity and dying in their sins, He chose to take their punishment for them
- A trade – I'll take your punishment, you live my life
- All you have to do is trust me and ask for it
- Romans 5:1, 2, 6 – 11, 17 – 21



# **D. Nothing else can take the place of new birth**

The new birth is a necessity because nothing else can take its place. There is no substitute for it. Education cannot take the place of the new birth.

Education is simply the training of the natural man. Education can cultivate, but it cannot create. This should be apparent from the analogy furnished by the physical realm.

The sense of touch may be trained to a high degree of proficiency, but it cannot give sight.

Hearing may be developed to the utmost acuteness, but it will not give the sense of taste or smell.

# **D. Nothing else can take the place of new birth**

Neither is it possible to produce a spiritual nature by the cultivation of the flesh. Nature maybe educated to the highest standard attainable, but it cannot be developed into something of a totally different order.

There is no process by which a man may be developed out of a horse, nor a beast out of a bird.

So also, between the natural and the spiritual a wide gulf is fixed. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and it never becomes anything else. But, “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

A spiritual nature is the result of a spiritual birth, and not the outcome of cultivating the natural man.

# **D. Nothing else can take the place of new birth**

Reformation cannot take the place of the new birth.

Reformation has to do with a man's habits, and not the man himself. If the works of your watch are out of order, no altering of the hands or polishing of the case will make it keep correct time; the trouble is inside.

So it is with the sinner. We may be correct in our deportment, clean in our habits and punctilious in our dealings, and still be dead in trespasses and sins. To one of the Pharisees, our Lord said: "Then the Lord said to him, 'Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness'" (Luke 11:39).

# **D. Nothing else can take the place of new birth**

This means that no amount of reformation can change the heart.  
“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.

The words I have spoken to you, they are full of the Spirit and life”  
(John 6:63). You may gather some weeds out of a field and  
transplant them in your garden; you may fertilize and irrigate them,  
but no amount of attention will transform them into rose bushes.

In other words, a new environment will not change our sinful nature.  
We need to be born “of God.”

# **D. Nothing else can take the place of new birth**

Religion cannot take the place of the new birth. Spurgeon, a great theologian, once said: “It is difficult to say how far a man may go in religion and yet die in his sins.” The Pharisees read the Scriptures, fasted oft, gave tithes, and made long prayers, and yet they rejected the counsel of God. It is possible to have one’s name inscribed upon a church register, and yet not have it written in the Lamb’s book of life. No performance of religious duties can take the place of the new birth.

How many there are who rely upon the fact that they say their prayers, read their Bibles, attend church, and partake of the Lord’s Supper, but who, nevertheless, are building upon the sand, rather than the Rock which is Christ!

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# **D. Nothing else can take the place of new birth**

The need of the new birth is universal. It was not to the woman taken in adultery, nor the thief on the cross, that our Lord said, "You must be born again." It was said to Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a teacher in Israel, a man of unblemished character. Unless Nicodemus was "born again," he could not enter the Kingdom of God. Neither can we!

Sinners, of which we are without Christ, in a little while at most we will be lying upon our deathbed (if deathbed we have). Then, it will matter nothing how large the fortune we have accumulated, how considerable the learning we may have acquired, nor how great the popularity or fame to which we may have attained; all that will matter then will be, have we been "born again?"

# **D. Nothing else can take the place of new birth**

The logical question that follows should be: “How can I be born again?”

How can I find Christ?”

The best answer that we can give is contained in the words of the Lord Jesus when He said: “Search the Scriptures...they are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).



# IV. The Author of the new birth

The new birth is due to a sovereign act of God.

We have no more to do with our second birth than we had with our first. It is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit.

This fact is clearly set forth in John 1:13, “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Let's examine this verse in detail.

# A. The new birth is not a matter of heredity

Salvation does not run in the blood. Natural descent cannot account for this supernatural phenomenon.

There were those in our Lord's earthly ministry who boasted that they were the descendants of Abraham. But He said unto them, "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father."

Many a good man has had a bad son, and many a bad father has had a good child. Isaac was the one of whom it was said: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Hebrews 11:18), yet he had Esau who was a profane person. Eli, the high priest, was a real man of God, yet his sons Hophni and Phinehas were slain by the Lord for their wickedness.

# A. The new birth is not a matter of heredity

David was a man after God's own heart, but his sons were idolaters.

On the other hand, Jonathan was born of Saul who, subsequently, became possessed of an evil spirit; while Amnon, one of the worst of Israel's kings, had a godly son, Josiah.

Salvation, then, does not run in the veins.

## B. The new birth is not a product of the sinner's will

Regeneration does not come by human resolution or effort.

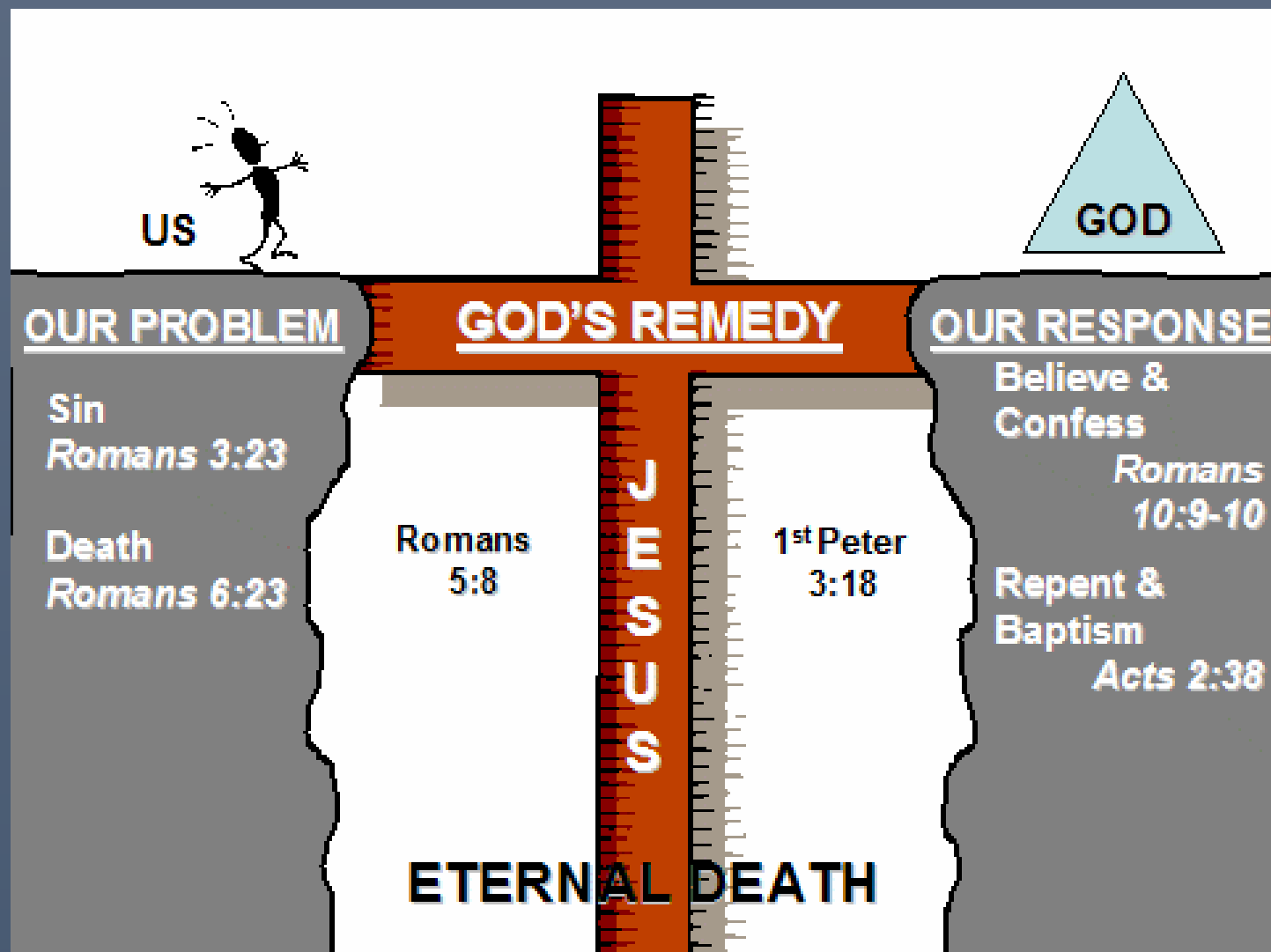
It is not the outcome of carnal volition or activity. Because we are alienated from God, we can never move toward Him until we have been renewed. "It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy" (Romans 9:16).

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:44).

The new birth, then, is not the outcome of the will of the flesh.

# It is of God.....

But God.....



## C. The new birth is of God

This is self-evident. If the new birth is the communication of the divine nature, then God Himself must be the Author of this work.

God alone is the Author and giver of life, and He bestows His gifts as He pleases, and quickens dead souls according to His own sovereign pleasure.

Accordingly, it is written, “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures” (James 1:18).

# V. The instrument of the New Birth

How is the new birth brought about? What are the means which God uses to accomplish it? What is the instrument the Holy Spirit employs to effect regeneration?

The Apostle Paul says, “For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel” (1 Corinthians 4:15). The apostle went from place to place preaching the Gospel of God’s grace and, as it found lodgment in their hearts, the Holy Spirit brought them from death unto life. In Philippians 2:16, the Scriptures are termed “The Word of Life,” because they alone are capable of quickening those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Said our Lord Jesus Christ, “The words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life.”

# V. The instrument of the New Birth

An illustration of this was furnished in the resurrection of Lazarus.

As our Lord stood before the tomb, He cried, "Lazarus, come forth," and His words were demonstrated to be spirit and life.

Jesus Christ is still performing the same miracle in the spiritual realm, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead [in trespasses and sins] shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25).



# VI. Evidence of the new birth

What fruits shall we look for in those who have been Born Again?

What are the marks of the new birth?

How may a person know that they have passed from death unto life?

These are most important questions, and ought to engage the serious attention of all earnest inquirers after truth.

# VI. Evidence of the new birth

Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus is speaking here. "Enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction or to eternal loss and there are many who go in by it because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life and there are few who find."

We are given only two options:

- 1) You travel thru the narrow gate, and it leads to the narrow Road which ultimately leads to life or eternal life.
- 2) You travel through the broad gate, and it leads to the Broad road which ultimately leads to destruction or eternal loss.

# Understanding the term, Narrow

Jesus uses the term narrow to describe what life in the Kingdom is like and what the Kingdom of God is like. The term, narrow is not a compliment. Being narrow or a narrow-minded person is not “good”. It means that you ought to change your ways; are too old school, no fun to be around, limited, restrictive, etc. It requires a need to change attitude.

It's not a term that we want to be connected to or associated with.

Note that Jesus had thousands of words at his disposal that he could have used to describe what life in the Kingdom is like and what God's will is like. He decided to describe it as being what narrow.

# Narrow Road vs Broad Road

Entering thru the Narrow Gate signifies being Born-Again.

Jesus says that our options are limited. Only few will enter through the narrow gate, and many have and will enter through the broad gate.

Relatively speaking, many are on the broad road, and a few are on the narrow road.

If few are on the Narrow Road, then it means that many people are going to hell or destruction and will suffer eternal loss relatively compared to the few are on the narrow road leading to heaven or eternal life.

That's crazy right?

# Narrow vs Broad

Is this just people in the world? Absolutely Not!

Jesus was speaking to a lot of church folks. The reality is that in many churches all over the world, and probably there are some among us, some claim to be Christians but who are really not living or walking or traveling the Narrow Road.

While they are professing to be Christians, they are on the Broad Road that is leading to eternal loss.

Examine yourself to see whether we're in the faith today or whether you are born again.

# Saving Faith

Remember that we are saved by grace through faith.

But what is the faith that saves? What is its nature? What are the components of saving faith?

In Acts 20:21 Paul says “I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Notice the two words: repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself says in Mark 1:15, “the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news/gospel.”

# Saving Faith

Wayne Grudem in his book “Bible doctrine” says,

“When we turned to Christ for salvation from our sins, we are simultaneously turning away from the sins that we are asking Him to save us from.”

We are asking not just to save us from hell. We are asking to be saved from sins. Sin is the evil for which we need to be delivered.

So, when we turn to Christ to deliver us from those sins, we are simultaneously turning away from those sins.

What that means practically is that saving faith always contains the important elements: Repentance and Faith.

# **Saving Faith**

Believe in God through Christ as Savior and Lord  
and repenting from those sins.

They are two sides of the one coin we call Saving Faith.

Every coin has two sides: head and tail.

Saving faith has two sides also



# Breaking Saving Faith down.....

a) Belief in Christ for our salvation. Eph. 2:8-9

b) Repentance toward God. Repentance from sin. It has to do with turning away from sin.

*Saving faith can't happen if belief and repentance are missing.*

Saving faith requires trusting in Christ and Christ alone for our salvation. If not, it's dead faith. Similarly, Saving faith requires repentance from sin.

So, living faith, the faith that ushers us into the experience of being born again always has two sides. One is belief in Christ and Christ alone and deciding to turn from sin.

The two go together.

# Saving Faith

In Matt. 7:13-14, He says that you should enter through the narrow gate traveled on the narrow road and that road leads to life.

Two options: You either enter on the narrow road that is leading to eternal life or you're on the broad road that is leading to eternal loss.

**Not many Options:** TV, food, games, schools, etc. But when it comes to the kingdom of God, there are only two options.

“I want to enter through the Broad or Wide Gate. I want to travel on the Broad Road, but I would like to substitute eternal loss for eternal life. That option is not available. If the enter the narrow road, it will lead to a narrow but eternal life. If you enter the broad gate, it will lead to the broad road and eternal loss.

# Saving Faith

Entering the narrow gate will make you a very narrow person when it comes to the people of this world and the things of God, and it will lead you to eternal life.

Which gate have you entered through?

How do you know which gate you enter?

**Answer:** The narrow gate leads to the narrow route. So if you look at your life and you find yourself still on the broad Road, You know which path you are heading to. On the other hand, if you have become a very narrow person since you came to Jesus and now you're living a narrow life that is focused on Jesus Christ and it's characterized by a life of repentance towards God and belief in Jesus for your salvation then you came through the narrow gate.

# Saving Faith

Narrow Gate/Life: Every day I'm placing my faith in Him and Him alone and every day I am repenting (turning away/resisting sin).

If that is the case, I am on the narrow road---which means I must have come through the narrow gate because I am looking to Christ and Christ alone. My faith is in Him alone.

It means, I am saved by grace alone, in Christ alone through faith alone according to the word of God, the Bible alone, for the glory of God alone.

# Reformation Theology

The Five Solas in Latin are:

- 1) Sola Scriptura (“Scripture alone”): The Bible alone is our highest authority.
- 2) Sola Fide (“faith alone”): Saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
- 3) Sola Gratia (“grace alone”): Saved by the grace of God alone.
- 4) Solus Christus (“Christ alone”): Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King.
- 5) Soli Deo Gloria (“to the glory of God alone”): We live for the glory of God alone.

# Saving Faith

If I am Trusting in Christ alone, what will follow will be a lifestyle of repentance; resisting sin and not just saying the Sinner's prayer and declaring that it's done.

If I have prayed this prayer and continue to live just like I've lived before and still have the same desires of the world and my lifestyle is no different from the lifestyle of a man or woman who does not know Jesus, then I am not on the narrow road.

*It doesn't mean you will not sin but if sin doesn't bother you then watch it!*

Just repeating the Sinner's prayer (words), doesn't get you through the narrow gate. What gets you through is Saving Faith; believing in Christ and Repentance toward God. It is not just repeating words.

# Saving Faith

Song:

There's a great change, Since I've been born

Great change, since I've been born

There's a great change, since I've been born

There's a great change, since I've been born

The things I used to do, I'd them no more

The way I used to speak, I'd speak no more

The way I used to act, I'd act no more,

There's a great change since I've been born.

# Here is our dilemma:

We all have a default position. Everyone who has walked on this earth has that position. It's the Wide gate that leads to eternal loss. Sinning is our default position.

Psalms 51:5 David says, "Behold I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me."

"In sin I was conceived by my mother." I was conceived in sin. I entered into this world by default on the broad road. I was sinful.

But Jesus.....Thank you Jesus for the exit ramp.



# Here is our solution: Grace

Thank God that there is grace. It is God's unmerited favor that He has chosen to bestow upon us.

Grace provides an exit ramp through Christ death.

Grace say, you can exit the broad road, make a u- turn. Enter through the narrow gate and get on the narrow road that leads to eternal life.

Don't stay there. Exit. There is danger on the broad road, exit.

# Here is our solution: Grace

The Greek word for repentance means “to change your mind”.

The Hebrew word for repentance means “to turn around”.

Being born again therefore means Changing direction.

Leave the road that is heading to eternal loss and turn around and start heading to the road that leads to eternal life.

Change your mind concerning sin. Place your faith in Christ's death, burial and resurrection for your salvation and if you do that, you exit on the ramp.

# Let's go deeper

Because you are born in sin, shaped in iniquity, God decided to change the default position and solve the bug problem in the system.

God has taken care of this problem. God has provided a way to exit and to enter the Kingdom of God on the narrow road.

In Luke 13:23-24 Jesus says something scary in response to a question asked. "Strive to enter in at the narrow gate: For many, I say to you will seek to enter and will not be able." Really? Why? That's scary.

# Let's go deeper

## What is Jesus saying?

For many will try to enter the Kingdom through the narrow gate and they won't be able. V. 25 "Once the master of the house has risen up and shut the door and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door."

The opportunity to exit this road that is leading to destruction make U-turn and come in through the narrow gate it's not going to be forever.

Strive to enter through this gate while the opportunity exists because the day is coming when you won't be able to.

# Let's go deeper

Strive or make every effort to enter now.

So isn't salvation free and not based on works? Yes, it is. It is by grace that you are saved. But remember salvation is turning to God and repenting (turning away from the world). It's a decision to turn away from my sin and turn to God.

So, what is the problem. Why do people struggle or don't want to be born-again? Why do people reject Jesus?

There are basically two reasons:

# Why?

People find that exceedingly hard to do because repentance and giving up the world is not easy.

Jesus says, you go ahead, and you do whatever you need to do; make the effort.

Whatever you need to do to repent, to surrender this world; give up worldly pleasure. DO IT!

# 1. Repenting is Hard

Repentance--unwillingness to give up sin is hard. We want to substitute eternal loss for eternal life while remaining on the broad road—holding on to the pleasure of that person/thing. We profess to be Christian, and our lifestyle is no different than those who aren't Christians. We do and pursue the same things the world does.

Your works will not earn your salvation. You don't work for your salvation. But repentance is a part of saving faith and if there is no genuine repentance, it only means you have not yet exercised saving faith. Struggling with sin is different than living and being comfortable with sin.

# 1. Repenting is Hard

If you are struggling, ask God for His help.

If you are comfortable then you should be concerned. You are on the wrong road.....

If you profess you are a Christian and you continue to live in sin and just make excuses and it doesn't bother you, then you should examine yourself to see whether you actually have come through the broad gate the narrow gate.

It's that simple!



# How do you know you entered thru the Narrow Gate?

The narrow gate leads to the narrow road. So you know that you've come through a narrow gate because now you're living a narrow life; a life of faith in Christ and repentance from sin.

If you're living that narrow life, you look to Jesus alone; believe in Him alone, by grace alone, and you are repenting; turning from sin asking Him to help you. You are resisting sin. That's the narrow way if that is happening, you know you came through a narrow gate and you can rest because the narrow road leads to only one place-- the Kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said, **work, strife.**

# How do you know you entered thru the Narrow Gate?

One reason why it is hard, and you will agree is due to the fact that the world is strong, and it can hold us down.

We can struggle to let go of it.

Ask someone who is living in sin, and they will give you all the reasons why they can't get out: Economical, social, emotional, societal, biblical, etc..

# Repenting is hard because sinning is our comfort zone

You don't have to struggle to sin. It comes naturally.

To change or learn something new takes effort, intentionality, work, striving, grace, time, etc. Ex. Learning a new skill or language.

Therefore, we stick with what we know because we know a 1000 ways to do it. We go to our default position. Sin, strife, cursing, grumpy, withholding speech, etc.

That's why people don't want the narrow road and they remain on the broad road which leads to destruction.

## II. It's hard to believe the Gospel

Believing the message of grace is hard. It's unfair, doesn't make sense and is illogical.

This message says, salvation is free. I need to believe in Jesus Christ. I don't have to be a good person. I don't have to.....

For some, it is unfair, unjust, not right that God will be willing to give salvation to wicked people.

Ex. Look at the thief on the cross. Look at those who are wicked and then repent. Really?

For some, it's stumbling block and to others, it's foolishness.

## II. It's hard to believe the Gospel

Some believe that people should be judged or accepted into heaven based on merits. They don't understand Law and Grace. They ask for us to prove ourselves as being worthy.

Jesus is saying, the day is coming when the gate will close. So work at it, try to understand it, pray about it, let God speak to you about it. This is not based on your intellect.

It's based on God's love not man's merits.

# Only Two Options

Two choices: Which will you choose?

By default, all of us are on the Broad Road but the opportunity exists to take the exit that God has provided through the Cross. Have you done so?

If you are living the narrow life, your focus is on faith in Christ and Christ alone. You've turned from sin to Him and on a daily basis you continue to look to Him to save you not just from hell but from sin itself and the evidence of that is that there will be a battle between your flesh and your spirit.

You cannot meet God in Christ and not be changed. You cannot have a genuine salvation experience and there are no changes in your desires first and then your behavior.

# Only Two Options

You may still struggle with some behavioral problems but, there's a change in your desires and if you are saved, it will eventually produce changes in your behavior.

Basically, you cannot, I believe in Christ, I have repented and continue to be the same.

2 Cor. 5:17 “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new.”

# Only Two Options

Your works and the sinner's prayer will not in and of themselves save you. But they will provide evidence of your salvation. You will start saying no to sin and yes to righteousness.

You will be saying, I can't continue to talk, act, dress, behave, or treat others like that. I can't live in this condition anymore. I actually now like these church folks. I like to pray, go to church, read my Bible. Sing Christian songs.

Ex. Experiencing a life changing event. It changes you forever. Meeting Christ is that way. You are never the same again.



# In essence....

Many will enter through the broad gate and remain on the broad Road. And they will end up with eternal loss destruction.

It's not only about hell. It is also the loss of meaning and purpose and a twisted life that does not fulfill the purpose for which God created you.

God created you for a reason and it's only when you are born again that you begin to understand and begin to fulfill that purpose.

It begins when you enter through the narrow gate, leading on the narrow road-----heading to heaven

Don't go after the crowd, go after Christ. He is the way, the truth..... He is the resurrection and the life; He is the vine and apart from Him you can do nothing.

# In essence....

Just because many people, even in the church, are living worldly (living like and pursuing pleasure, power, and popularity) doesn't mean you need to join them.

That road leads to loss. We should be chasing after Christ and godly passion. We should be striving; putting all of our efforts into it.

That is how you know you are on the narrow road or the broad road.

What are you pursuing? Where is your mind when you wake up? Where do you find pleasure, fun, acceptance, joy? In church or in the world?

# In essence....

Ex. An athlete who wants to win disciplines him/herself.

To do this, they have to live a “narrow life”.

Get rid of sin and weigh that will slow you down.

Weighs are thing that occupy your time and stop you from serving God, being in church, giving of your time and resources. You will have to say “NO” to some things.

You have to make the decision because no one can make it for you.

It's either the narrow road or the broad road.

# The Good News

Even though the gate is narrow, it's wide enough for every man and every woman who wants to come to the father through Jesus to enter.

Jesus says, "I am the way and I am the door." He's not the door and the way because he wants to keep you out. He the door and the way because he wants every man every woman who wants to come to the father to be able to do so through Him

So right now, the gate is not yet shut. The narrow gate is still opened, and Jesus is still at the door and He's saying to all you that labor and are burdened, come.

# The Good News

“Come through me and I will give you rest.” Repent from your sins. Exit the broad road and enter into the narrow gate and let God's purpose for your life be fulfilled; both in this life and in the life to come.

*You must be born again.*

That is why Jesus said, to Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10 “Today salvation has come to this house. Is this man not also a son of Abraham? For the Son of Man came to save those who were lost.”

# Part IV

What ought to be my attitude if I am “Born Again”?

Basically, being “Born Again” requires.....

# A. Personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (John 3:36).

We also read in John, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24).

# A. Personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

In these passages, we learn that those who believe in the Lord Jesus are already in possession of eternal life, which is only another way of saying that they have previously been regenerated. Wherever there is a real reposing on Christ for salvation, there is clear evidence of the new birth. If you have abandoned all hope of being saved by your own works, if you have rejected the filthy rags of your own righteousness as the ground of acceptance with God; if you have come as a lost, helpless sinner to Christ and have cried unto Him for mercy and are depending on Him alone for salvation, it is proof that you have already been born again. Just as a baby instinctively clings to its mother, the newborn babe of God clings, in its helplessness, to the Savior.



## B. Genuine repentance for sin

According to the Scriptures, one believes and then repents.

There is a difference between repentance in a sinner and repentance in a Christian. In the unregenerate, repentance is the abhorrence of self, the realization of my ruined condition, the taking of the place of a lost sinner before God.

But with the believer repentance is a hatred of sin and a grief of heart whenever he is overtaken by it.

In the believer, “godly sorrow worketh repentance.” But “godly sorrow” implies that we have the divine nature within us, and this no sinner has.

## B. Genuine repentance for sin

Repentance is more than sorrow for sin, it is a “godly sorrow.”

Many a criminal lying in our penitentiaries has the former, but none save the children of God experience the latter. I repent not because I am fearful of or miserable in the punishment of my wrongdoing, but because I know that sin is hateful to God and grievous in His sight. Repentance is more than an act; it is an attitude.

Repentance is taking sides with God and against sin. What this means is, God is Holy and hates sin and if I am His child, I have His holy nature within me, and consequently I shrink from sin and grieve over it when I am guilty of its commission.

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## C. Real love for God

God is holy, and having His nature within us, we hate sin. But this is merely a negative thing. God is love, and having been begotten by Him, we love the One who is our Father. **Here is the positive principle in regeneration.** “....God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:16).

It is the normal condition for children to love their parents, and those who have been born again will love the One who has begotten them. But the question is this: how may we know whether or not we love God? We cannot truly love anybody without our being conscious of the fact.

If we love God, our affections have been drawn out toward Him.

## C. Real love for God

His excellency has won our hearts. We can now say with the psalmist, “Whom have I in Heaven but you? And there is nothing on Earth that I desire besides you” (Psalms 73:25).

Moreover, if we love God, our chief desire will be to please Him. Said our Lord, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:7-8).

## C. Real love for God

Observe the order—love precedes the knowledge of God.

In the human realm, we have to know a person before we love them, but God has to be loved before He is known.

God is known by the heart and not by the head. “The fool has said in his heart there is no God.” Have we then a real love for God? Do we see in Him every beauty that we should desire Him?

Are our meditations of Him “sweet?” Is He the One before whom we bow in adoring worship? If so, this is an evidence that we have been born again.

## D. Love for the brethren

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God” (1 John 4:7). God is love, and if we have His nature within us, we will love His children—love them all, irrespective of their social standing, their intellectual attainments, their denominational affiliation; love them whether they be black or white, rich or poor, cultured or illiterate. In the human realm, it is the normal condition for members of the same family to love each other. A tie of blood binds their hearts together. That is how it should be in measure, without limitation, in the family of God. His children, also, are united by blood tie—the blood of Christ, in which all believers have a common interest. In the early days of the Christian era, it was a customary thing for the pagans to say of the saints, “See how they love one another!”

## D. Love for the brethren

How is this love to be manifested?

Read 1 John 3:17-18. It says, "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."

If we love our sisters and brothers in Christ, we must seek to defend their characters, promote their interests, minister to their need, and seek their well-being.



## E. Life of practical righteousness

Faith is evidenced by its works exactly how a tree is known by its fruits.

A godly nature manifests itself in a godly life. “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him” (1 John 2:29).

One evidence that we have been born again is the performance of righteousness.

The unregenerate are termed “children of disobedience.” They have no respect for God’s law, they refuse to submit themselves to His authority; they are more concerned about their own interests than they are with the glory of God.

## E. Life of practical righteousness

But those who have been begotten by the Spirit “yield their members as instruments of righteousness” and God’s Word.

They recognize that they are no more their own but have been bought with a price. They have been “created in Christ Jesus to do good works” (Ephesians 2:10).

Therefore, they pray that the fruit of the Spirit may adorn their lives.

The believer’s life is not regulated by the fashions, methods, maxims, and pursuits of the world, but by Christ who has left us an example that we should follow His steps.

## F. Growth in grace

Stagnation breeds disease and death. A limb that is never used becomes paralyzed.

A living being is expected to grow. Hence, we are exhorted, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

As we feed upon the Bread of Life, our spiritual nature is developed, and the inward man is renewed day by day.

As we live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord, we become strong in His strength and the power of His might.

## F. Growth in grace

The life of the regenerate is a going on from strength to strength and from glory to glory. “The path of the just...shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18).

Here, then, is our standard of measurement. Are we becoming more Christlike?

Are we “growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord?”

If so, it is an evidence that we are numbered among the children of God.

# G. Steady perseverance to the end

Here is a fundamental difference between professors and genuine believers.

There is a class of people who “hear the Word, and with joy receive it; yet have they no root in themselves but lasts for a while: for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, by and by they are offended” (Matthew 13:20-21).

But these people have never been regenerated. The divine nature has never been imparted to them, consequently they have “no root” in them.

# G. Steady perseverance to the end

In contrast with them, God's children "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

They may fall, but they are not utterly cast down (Psalms 37:24).

They may backslide like Peter, but, like Peter, they shall go out and weep bitterly, and be restored.

He that has been born again has been made a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4); and God is eternal, therefore shall they never perish.

# G. Steady perseverance to the end

At the close of his earthly pilgrimage, every regenerated soul shall be able to say, in measure at least, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

# G. Steady perseverance to the end

## Study questions:

- What is the difference between regeneration and reformation?
- Why do we need to experience a new birth and what does it mean?
- What is the instrument of the new birth?
- How does one know he/she has experienced the New Birth?



