



Scripture Reference: 1 Peter 1:3-5 & 13-23

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INTRODUCTION—

For a parent, there are a few dates that it is impossible to forget. One of those dates for me was late in the afternoon on October 28, 2012. I had just gotten home from a long shift at the police department and was ready for a nap. My wife, who was almost nine months pregnant, was at home waiting for me. She was still about seven days out from her due date, but when I arrived home she stated, "I am feeling the baby moving a lot. I think we need to go to the hospital to get checked." So she called the hospital in Enterprise, Alabama, and they advised for her to come into the emergency room for a check-up. So reluctantly, thinking this was just a "false alarm" drove my wife to the emergency room. Jessica sat there in pain as we just waited and waited. We sat in there almost an hour before one of the nurses came out to get us. She escorted us to a small room and said that the doctor would be with us shortly. About thirty minutes passed and a couple of nurses came into the room and wanted to check and see if Jessica was dilated at all. The look on the nurses' face went from smiles to pale white. They immediately looked at Jessica and said, "Do Not Push, I got to get the doctor!" They ran out of the room and within seconds the room was filled with medical staff. Two minutes later, our youngest daughter, Charity, entered the world.

I was the first one to hold her, and examine our new addition. She was perfect. I even joked that she had a little birthmark on her back just like Jessica had. A few minutes later, the nursing staff wheeled Charity off to clean her up, give her shots, and give her a checkup. A few hours later, the staff opened the room door and said, "Are you ready to spend some time with your baby?" They wheeled in this glass bassinet and when I looked down, the child in that tub was not my baby. As a matter of fact, the baby was not even of the same race as we were. The baby was Asian; a fat, little Asian baby. I

exclaimed to the nurse that the baby in the crib was not ours. She checked the wrist bracelet and said, "Yes, it is your baby." I then rolled the baby on our side and looked at the baby's back. There was no birthmark. Not to mention, that baby was a boy. That baby was not ours. The nurse left the room with the baby and returned a few minutes later and smilingly said, "Sorry for the mix-up, I think this one is yours." As soon as the baby entered the room, I knew her. The second I saw her face when she was born, I never would forget it. I took the baby from the nurses' arms, unwrapped the blankets from her, checked her back and said, "Yep, she's got the birthmark. She's mine!"

Nearly 95% of the population has one. They come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and forms. Doctors cannot give an exact reason for what causes them, but they show up at birth. Rarely are two ever the same. They are called birthmarks. They are so individually particular, law enforcement and forensics use birthmarks to identify people. We don't know what exactly causes them, but they show up immediately after birth. In other words, there is a mark on the baby proving it was born.

Jesus exclaimed in the Book of John, Chapter 3...

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be amazed that I said to you, You must be born again."

(John 3:5-7)

Just by your setting here today, there is no doubt that you were born! Sometime in your life, your mother went into labor, and you were born for the first time. Because, what is known as the "water breaking," we were all born the first time by water. We were born of the flesh, because from flesh (our mother) we were brought into this world. However, Jesus says in this passage. Just being born will not grant you into the Kingdom. We were born of flesh, but we must be born of the Spirit. We were born of water, but we must be born of the water and the Spirit. Jesus says we must be born again. That phrase (born again) literally means 'born from above.' We were all born from below and from earthly parents, but Jesus is saying, "We must not only become children of our parents, but become a child of our Heavenly Father." So how do we become children of God? The Book of Galatians explains...

"For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

(Galatians 3:27-29)

Once you have placed your faith in the LORD, Jesus Christ, confessed him as the lord or supreme authority of your life, and repented of your sins, you have now been born again. The Book of Ephesians tells us...

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit." (NIV)

(Ephesians 1:13)

The very spirit of God enters our life after we believe in Jesus, and the spirit gives us a "MARK" (literally a birthmark) proving that we have been born again. We have been born of the water, now we're born of the spirit and water. With this mark, we know belong to God. We are now His children. Just like I knew Charity belonged to me because of her birthmark, God knows us because He has placed a seal or mark on us. Second Timothy explains it this way...

"Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal. The Lord knows those who are His, and Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

(2 Timothy 2:19)

TRANSITIONAL SENTENCE—

Now that we know we all receive a mark or seal after becoming the children of God, it is now to expose the mark. It is not a physical mark; it is a spiritual birthmark. So let's look together at the birthmarks, the proof or evidence of a born again believer.

EVIDENCE FOR A BORN AGAIN BELIEVER

1. You Will Have a Birthday.

You may not remember the exact day or time, but there has to be a moment or event in your life in which you know you were born again. For me, it was around noon on January 1, 1989. In spiritual years, I've just celebrated my 30th birthday. Maybe it was in an old fashioned revival service where you gave your life to Christ. Perhaps, you met Christ at a church altar. Wherever you confessed and repented of your old ways, there is where you were reborn. That is where you were delivered; not just spiritually delivered but delivered from the power of sin also. That became the day you again became like a little innocent child in the eyes of God. You were spotless and perfect. You ought to celebrate that day. Your earthly birthday is special, but every birthday only proves that your one day closer to death. However, your spiritual birthday proves that your one day closer to Jesus.

2. You Will Be Nurtured by the Father

"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God..."
(Romans 8:14-16)

3. You Will Crave Spiritual Food.

"Like newborn infants, desire the pure spiritual milk, so that you may grow by it for your salvation,³ since you have tasted that the Lord is good."
(1 Peter 2:2-3)

4. We Will Have a Resemblance of Our Father

*"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."
(Ephesians 5:1)*

For those who are parents, you've seen your children try to be like you. There have been many times I've seen my children wearing my shoes, or wearing my police cap. As children, we loved dressing up as our parents. The same is true for those born of God. We need to resemble Him. Have His qualities in our life. Love the things that He loves and despise the things that He despises.

5. We Will Behave Like God's Children

*"If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him."
(1 John 2:29)*

"Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;⁸ the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

(1 John 3:7-9)

There is an old saying that states, "Christians are not sinless, but Christians do sin less." A person who claims to be a child of God, but continually practices and lives in sin is a liar and is only deceiving himself. A true child of God will have this birthmark that causes him not to desire sinful things.

6. We Will Love Our Brothers and Sisters

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

(1 John 4:7-8)

One of the birthmarks of a born-again believer is the desire to fellowship with, to pray for, to share with and serve other brothers and sisters in Christ. In short, we love our brothers and sisters.

7. We Want to Brag on Our Father to the World

"Do all things without grumbling or disputing;¹⁵ so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world..."

(Philippians 2:14-15)

A couple years ago, Trinity secretly put me in for an award for being her hero. She stood on stage, before a group of nearly a thousand people and told them why she loved me and why I was her hero. My eyes swelled with pride as I saw her testify of her love for me and as she presented me the Great American Hero Award. Much like this, we too must be the lights of Christ to the world. Because He is my great Father, I'm happy to tell brag on Him to everybody!