

ENTERING THE KINGDOM

When springtime comes, new life begins to appear after the cold winter. In classic writings the term **‘regeneration’** referred to changes produced by spring. Our focus here is on another type of regeneration, one mentioned in the Bible. Its Greek word **palingenesia** is used twice in the New Testament. It comes from two words: **palin** (again) and **genesis** (birth/beginning)

‘So Jesus said to them, Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of his glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’ - Matthew 19:28 NKJV

Jesus was referring here to the **new age** to come when he returns to earth to set up his earthly kingdom in fulfillment of his promises to Israel in the Old Testament. The NIV of Matt. 19:28 replaces the word regeneration with the phrase, **at the renewal of all things**. Acts 3:21 talks of the **‘restoration** of all things’ when Jesus returns. All of the above refer to the dramatic change that will occur when Jesus restores order to the earth as it was designed to be. However, before this new age is revealed, God has purposed that he will have a vast multitude of followers who will be prepared to reign with Him and fully enjoy the new world. As His sons and daughters, they will share the heart and mind of Almighty God in this grand plan. He will be their loving Father and Jesus will be their faithful king, friend and brother.

This brings us to the second time the word regeneration is used in the New Testament, but in this instance it deals with individuals. There is a great difference between the old nature and the new one.

‘For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.’ - Titus 3:3-7 NKJV

Galatians 5:19-22 gives specificity to the acts of the sinful nature and the fruit of the Spirit. In another message, we will look at how Jesus displayed the Spirit’s fruit, which is the character and nature of God.

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

Jesus spoke those words to Nicodemus, a prominent religious leader and a Pharisee. This small group of Jews attempted to keep all the laws of the Torah and also hundreds more of man-made laws. For example, the Pharisees had 24 pages of regulations on how to properly keep the Sabbath day. Jesus talked with Nicodemus about how one must be **born again** in order **to see the kingdom** of God. John 3:3. The original language means **born from above**. The Holy Spirit needs to open our eyes so that we can see God’s invisible kingdom. Jesus infers that we are blind without the Spirit and Paul reminds us:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

*The **god of this age** has **blinded the minds** of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. - 2 Corinthians 4:4-5 NIV*

FIRST BIRTH

1. Physical, natural, fleshly
2. No choice, do nothing
3. No knowledge needed
4. Produces sinful nature - Romans 5:12
5. Seed of man, born of man
6. Perishable seed - Matthew 7:18
7. Mortal and dies - Hebrews 9:27
8. Child of devil - John 8:44, 1 John 3:10
9. Sentence of death - Romans 5:19, 6:23
10. Unrighteous nature - Galatians 5:19
11. Dead in sin - Ephesians 2:1-3
12. Led by the world, flesh, devil
13. Object of wrath - Ephesians 2:3
14. Thoughts of death - Romans 6:6
15. Eternal death - Rev. 14:9-11
16. Born once, die twice - Rev. 20:14

SECOND BIRTH

- New, spiritual, supernatural
Must choose, do something
Receive, obey Jesus - John 1:12, 3:36
Sinless nature - 1 John 3:9
Seed of God, born of God
Imperishable seed - 1 Peter 1:23
Immortal, never dies - John 11:25-26
Child of God - John 1:12, 1 John 3:1
Gift of eternal life - Romans 6:23
Righteous nature - 2 Cor. 5:21, 2 Peter 1:4
Alive with Christ - Ephesians 2:4-5
Led by the Word and Spirit - Romans 8:14
Object of love - Ephesians 2:4, Romans 5:8
Thoughts of life and peace
Eternal life - John 5:24
Born twice, die once - John 11:25

How Are We Born Again ?

We get some insight from when God created the whole universe. The earth was formless, empty, disordered and dark, then the Holy Spirit **moved** over the waters. The word moved is the same word used as when a hen **hovers** over her chicks, bringing life, warmth and comfort.

In the beginning God (prepared, formed, fashioned, and) created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and an empty waste, and darkness was upon the face of the great deep. The Spirit of God was moving (hovering, brooding) over the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light and there was light. And God saw that the light was good (suitable and pleasant) and He approved it; and God separated the light from the darkness. - Genesis 1:1-4 AMPC

Soon after, we see how God created Adam and Eve and breathed his life into them as they became living souls. After they sinned in the garden, they lost the glory of God that encircled them as spiritual darkness separated them from God. Since that time, the world was in spiritual darkness, but God was preparing a light who would shine brightly. 700 years before his arrival, the prophet Isaiah spoke of him.

In the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan - The people walking in darkness have seen a **great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a **light** has dawned. Isaiah 9:1-2**

Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which **the rising sun will come to us from heaven to **shine** on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death. Luke 1:78-79**

How the world was created. How a person is born again into a new creation in Christ.

DARKNESS

HOLY SPIRIT COMES

GOD'S WORD SPOKEN

= NEW CREATION

The Holy Spirit gives us the nature of God himself and we have his genes, thus we are regenerated. We have a new Father and will begin to look more like him as part of his family.

***'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!'** - 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV*

We are new creations who have supernatural DNA from God. We should never say that we are 'only human', for we born of the supernatural Spirit of God.

Perhaps we could say that DNA here could stand for **Divine Nature Attributes** (we have his moral attributes but he is far superior in other ways).

When we are born physically, we take on some of the attributes and tendencies of our ancestors. As new born baby, we are destined to mature to adulthood. It is the same when one is born of the Spirit of God. They have the potential to grow into the likeness of God, that is Jesus Christ.

For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
- Romans 8:29

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. - John 5:24

Our home country is heaven and we are its ambassadors here on earth. We are to represent Jesus and his message to the world. He spoke much about the kingdom of God and the only way to enter was that a person **must** be born again. One young man in England took that message seriously.

George Whitefield (1714-1770) helped his mother work in a tavern while young because his father died at an early age. He was a mischievous boy who went to church and then would go back to the bar and mimic the pastor, which entertained the drunkards. Later he attended Oxford University where he had a new birth while attending the "Holy Club" started by John Wesley. Soon after, George began to preach in the largest churches and in the open fields. He also went to the American colonies seven different times to reach great crowds in the open air.

He had a great love for people and a big booming voice. Benjamin Franklin measured his voice and said it could be heard at a distance of a 1/2 mile and even up to a mile away if the weather conditions were right. He could capture the ears and attention of a crowd of 30,000 to 40,000 people without the use of a microphone! Even more captivating was his primary message:

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

It is estimated that he preached it over 3000 times. One critic asked him why he spoke so often on the same subject. George responded: 'Because sir, you must be born again!' One time he preached at Harvard University (founded as a training center for ministers) and it was claimed that every student and professor received Jesus as their Savior! George would gather listeners back in England wherever large numbers of people were gathered. Public hangings were common in his day. Just after the hanging, Whitefield would climb the platform and preach about death and eternal life. It was said: 'When the body stops twitching, Whitefield starts preaching'. One time he preached at a horse race track and over 10,000 left the track to come hear him preach. One time he received great opposition at a carnival from the owner as most of the large crowd left and went to hear George preach. The owner sent out a prize fighter to

'take care of the preacher'. However, Whitefield was not intimidated and declared to the fighter the words of Romans 1:16 about not being ashamed of the gospel. The prize fighter meekly turned around and left.

George returned the next day to the carnival and the owner sent a man to throw eggs, parts of dead dogs and rocks at him. Nothing would stop Whitefield from his passion to reach the people for Christ. During his lifetime he was able to see about 500,000 people come to Christ. Pretty amazing considering the time that he lived in.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost and all that was lost through the fall in the Garden of Eden. Whitefield had a similar compassion for those who were dead in their sin. We can follow in their steps as we take notice of those around us who need to be born again. Before we speak to people about God it is good to speak to God about those people. The Spirit of God will lead and guide us.

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