

## **The New Birth Teaching Series Transcript**

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### **Table of Contents**

Introduction: Revelation and Reason .....	2
What Jesus had to do Before the New Birth was Available.....	3
When Were the Disciples Born Again? .....	6
What was the Spiritual Condition of the Disciples Before the Day of Pentecost?.....	13
What is "the Promise" of the Father?.....	18
Does a Person Receive the Spirit Before He is Baptized With It? .....	23
What Did Jesus Mean by "Born Again?" .....	26
The Blood of Christ.....	30
The Spirit of Antichrist .....	34
What Must I Do to be Born Again? .....	41

This transcript has not been thoroughly edited. Errors of transcription may still be present. Division of text into paragraphs has been somewhat *ad hoc* but it is hoped that the text will bless all who read it. It contains vital understanding. To hear the audio of Pastor John Clark, Sr., delivering this teaching please visit:

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## **Introduction: Revelation and Reason**

In the third chapter of John's gospel we find Jesus talking to an elder of Israel named Nicodemus. And to this man he said, "Unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God". Nicodemus didn't understand what Jesus meant by the new birth and neither did anyone else at that time. You must be born again. Jesus said it and so it must be true and we must have help from God to understand what He meant and God has given us that help. He's given us a revelation and he's given us reason so that we can apply that revelation to life.

Unless we rightly understand the new birth we cannot understand forgiveness, we cannot rightly understand repentance, we cannot rightly understand what God means when He refers to His family on Earth. We cannot know the difference between believers and unbelievers if we don't know who is born again and who is not. We don't know the real Spirit of God unless we know when a person is born again. And what all this leads to is that we do not know God, our heavenly Father, the way He wants us to know Him unless we understand what Jesus meant by the phrase "born again".

We all have many experiences in Christ as we go through this life, all of us who believe, but which of those experiences is the one experience of new birth. When were the disciples born again? When were you born again? Which one of the experiences that you have had with Jesus is the experience of new birth?

We have revelation from God in the Scriptures and we are told to study the Scriptures. We must become acquainted with what God has let us know. Our reasoning comes into play only after we've been touched by God, only after God has spoken to us, only after we have read the Scriptures. Our reasoning alone is worthless to bring us to the knowledge of God. Our thinking, our reasoning must be based upon the revelation of God. None of us, no one who has ever been born, has enough intelligence to come to the knowledge of God, without God reaching down and having mercy from heaven and communicating to that person.

We must begin our journey of understanding with God's communication to us. And God calls us to this. Through Isaiah, in chapter 1 verse 18, God called to His people and He said, "Come, let us reason together". Being unreasonable is a quality of wickedness. Paul puts them together when he wrote to the Thessalonians and mentioned wicked and unreasonable men. So, all of our reasoning must be based on revelation and we have the revelation and we want to know what the revelation says; we want to look into the Scriptures for one source of revelation and see what God has told other people and what those other people recorded for us to read. God can also give us revelation through His Spirit. Jesus said to His disciples before they received the Spirit, "when the Spirit is come, it will guide you into all truth". So we must have the Spirit of God communicating to us as we are reading the Bible so that we can be guided into all truth. But God will also require us to be reasonable people with the truth that He reveals. So we take God's revelation as our foundation. We must have it as our basis for our reasoning.

## **What Jesus had to do Before the New Birth was available.**

And we want to start our reasoning about the New Birth with the book of Hebrews, in chapter 9. Chapter 9 I have often called the center of the Bible or the heart of the Bible because it summarizes and refers to what God did in the Old Covenant; what He did in the New through Jesus and His sacrifice and it refers to the return of our Lord for His people in the end. Here in Hebrews chapter 9 we have a very important statement about the New Birth, about the requirement of the New Birth and it uses reason.

In verses 16 and 17 the author of Hebrews says, “*where a testament is [and a testament is someone’s last will], there must necessarily be the death of the testator.*” Now the dictionary definition of testator is one who makes out a will especially one who has died and has left a will. And where someone has a will they must die in order for the particulars of that will to be enforced. You could write a will out for someone to have your car but they can’t have your car until you’re dead. Where a testament is, where the New Testament is, where this New Covenant came into being, there had to be the death of the testator, and that’s Jesus.

Jesus is the testator of the New Testament. New Testament and New Covenant, by the way, are the same thing. Covenant is another way of saying testament. But then, the author of Hebrews in chapter 9 goes on to the next verse and says “*For a testament [or a will] is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator is living.*” Now what this means for us in practical terms if we are going to be reasonable based on the revelation of God is that no one could possibly have been born again before Jesus died because His death brought about the New Testament and the New Testament is the New Birth. By the New Birth we enter into His New Testament. That’s reasonable. The New Testament was not in effect before Jesus died and so it is only reasonable that we say that the New Birth was available only after He died.

If people could be born again before Jesus died then what was the point of His death. He didn’t have to die if people could be born again and have their sins washed away without the shedding of His blood. It’s unreasonable to think that anyone was born again while Jesus walked the Earth, or anytime during the Old Testament. Without really thinking about it many can assume or many actually believe that the disciples were born again before Jesus died. But how could that be? That’s unreasonable based on the revelation that we have from God.

Jesus died for the purpose of redeeming us from sin. That happens when we are born again. When your sins are washed away it’s when you enter into that New Covenant with God and that’s the New Birth. We read the stories in the Bible of people who believed Jesus while He walked on the Earth; the woman at the well, Bartimaeus, Zacchaeus, His disciples and others, but we cannot assume that they were born again simply because they humbled themselves to Jesus. Jesus, we are told in Galatians chapter 4, was born under the Law. He died under the Law. So, if He was born and if He died during the time when the Old Covenant was still in effect it wasn’t possible to be born again yet. He came to die to bring that first Covenant to its intended end, but His death was required. Everyone who believed in Jesus before He died believed in an Old Covenant way.

We are blessed by the many songs about the blood of Jesus but many times people speak of the

new birth as if that blood was not even necessary. In Hebrews chapter 9 again, in verse 22 we are told that, “*without the shedding of blood there is no remission [of sins]*”. There was no remission of sins, there was no new birth, there was no New Covenant before the blood was shed.

The New Covenant did not come about before Jesus died. His death was the precondition for the redemption of men. His death had to precede the new birth. So that’s our first reasonable conclusion based on the revelation of God; that no one could be born again before Jesus died.

But there’s more revelation. The revelation, remember, is always perfect, our reasoning can be flawed, especially if we jump to hasty conclusions. There is more information about this new birth. There is more information about what was necessary in order for redemption to come, remission of sins to come, the New Testament, because we are told in 1Cor 15:17, that “*if Christ is not raised [from the dead], then your faith is vain; and you are still in your sins.*” So this is more revelation that we have to base our reason on. God communicated this revelation to Paul that if Jesus had not been raised from the dead there would be no remission of sins.

Based upon that revelation it’s only reasonable for us to conclude that no one was born again before Jesus’ resurrection. If you are still in your sins if He had not been raised, then we needed His resurrection in order for sins to be washed away. No one then could have been born again before Jesus’ death and no one could have been born again before His resurrection.

But there’s more revelation. In John 16 Jesus said that it was absolutely necessary that He go away in order for the Spirit to come. Now we know that we are washed from our sins by the Spirit of God. Paul tells us that in 1Cor 6:9-11. The Spirit of God is what generates that new birth. Remember what He told Nicodemus? “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*” We must have had God send the Spirit back to have that cleansing, to have that remission.

The revelation then is this. No one was born again before His death; no one was born again before His resurrection and, no one was born again before His ascension, after which the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of life, came upon those who believed on Him. Everything Jesus did was absolutely necessary for our salvation. Everything! His coming to Earth, His life on Earth, His death, His resurrection, and, His ascension.

But there’s more revelation. Hebrews 9 tells us, near the end of that chapter, in that part that I call the heart of the heart of the Bible, that Jesus offered Himself to God so that God would wash away our sins.

We have all these revelations from God that lead us to one conclusion, if we are reasonable. We have in Hebrews saying a New Covenant; the New Covenant was based on the death of the testator so no one was born again before Jesus died. We have the other Scriptures saying that if Jesus isn’t risen then you are still in your sins. We have the Scripture from Hebrews 9 saying that Jesus offered Himself to God for our sins after He ascended. So all of these things tell us that everything Jesus did was necessary for our sins to be washed away, for us to be born again.

The revelation is that everything that Jesus did was important. He didn't waste a moment. He didn't waste any of His strength. Everything He did had a purpose and the purpose was so that we would be born again. Everything He did; His coming to Earth, His life on Earth, His death on Earth, His resurrection and His ascension back to the Father and His offering Himself for the sins of the world, all tell us that it was important that He do that so that we could be born again. And that no one was born again before He completed every one of those steps. Now let's keep on being reasonable here, based on this revelation.

If no one was born again before Jesus' death, or His resurrection or ascension or offering Himself to the Father after He ascended. Then it's reasonable to assume that if that is true, that the new birth was dependent upon all of that, we should find then in Matthew, Mark and Luke and John, Jesus speaking to his followers of a new life which they did not have while they were following him. We should expect to find in the gospels, before Jesus died, him telling his followers about an experience they didn't have, but they needed it. And isn't that what he told Nicodemus, "You must be born again"? Nicodemus didn't even know what Jesus was saying.

But that's what we have all the way through Jesus' ministry. He repeatedly promised the disciples that the Spirit was coming. This was at the last supper, over and over again he brought up the subject of the holy Ghost coming upon them after he left. But that's only what reason would lead us to expect him to be saying. If the new birth is so important that we must have it, then certainly Jesus would have been talking about it. And that's what he did.

In Matthew 18 we find Jesus telling all of his disciples "Unless you are converted and become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven". Conversion is the new birth. No one is converted before he is born again because in this New Testament the form of conversion is the new birth. In Luke 22 he's very specific talking to Peter and saying "Peter, when you are converted I want you to strengthen the brethren". You see, the disciples were not born again when they began to follow Jesus. But they put themselves in a position to be born again after Jesus finished his sacrificial work. But his blood was the purchase price of their redemption. It had to be shed. And then it had to be offered to the Father.

In John 16 in the Last Supper scene some of Jesus' last words were to describe or to compare his disciple's spiritual condition with the condition of a woman who had come to the hour of birth. He told them it's near. He told them "You're sorrowful now because I'm telling you I'm going away" and your sorrow is like a woman who is going through birth pains. "But your sorrow", he said, "shall be turned into joy." When? When was their sorrow turned into joy? Before he died or sometimes after? When did Peter begin to mention a joy unspeakable and full of glory?

Now because of this generation's confusion concerning the word "saved", I need to point this out. In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John Jesus referred to some people this way, "Your faith has saved you". He did not mean that they were born again. To be born again was impossible for them because Jesus was still walking here on the earth.

What did he mean then? It meant only that they were made whole in an Old Testament manner. It meant that they were forgiven. It meant that they were brought into a right standing with God under the Law through their faith in the Son of God.

The thief on the cross is probably with Jesus now in Paradise, but he was not born again on the cross. He died the same day Jesus died. The new birth was not possible. Jesus may have forgiven his sins there as they hung on the cross together (one hanging on his cross and Jesus hanging on his). But there was forgiveness of sins from the time of Moses and before. But forgiveness of sins under the Old Testament was not being born again.

If the revelation of God is true, and we know it is, then Jesus' death, burial and ascension and offering himself to the Father had to come before anyone was born again. So we take that revelation and apply it to these situations; the thief on the cross, the woman at the well, Bartimaeus, Zacchaeus and the disciples, and many, many others. And we see their faith as good, and we see their connection with God as real. And we see the forgiveness of God for them as real, but we also understand that they could not possibly have been born again before Jesus died.

And if no one was born again in Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, or before them from Genesis all the way to the book of Acts then we should expect to find the disciples to be talking about the new birth only from the book of Acts onward toward Revelation. We should find Jesus' followers and his disciples discussing the new birth, mentioning being born of the Spirit only from the time of Acts onward. And that is exactly what we find.

## **When Were the Disciples Born Again?**

We continue now with part two of The New Birth Series, studying the phrase Jesus coined, "Ye must be born again". In this part two we are going to be focusing on finding the answer to the question, "When were the disciples born again?"

We've already seen that according to revelation and reason that they could not have been born again before Jesus died or before he rose from the dead or before he ascended into heaven or before he offered himself to the Father after he ascended into heaven. His ascension took place in Acts, chapter 1. So that means that no one, including the disciples, was born again before the book of Acts.

Let's begin our study on the disciples, when they were born again in John 16. Now the scene is this; Jesus is spending his last evening with the disciples. He knows he is about to die. It would be his last conversation with them before his death. And in this Last Supper scene, knowing now that these words were to be his final ones to his disciples before his suffering begins, I cannot help but believe that Jesus was making an especially intense effort to establish his disciples' faith so that his death would not discourage them. It came close even as it was, but by the grace of God Jesus managed to put enough of the word of God into their heart that it kept them from being completely discouraged after his death.

He told them that he was leaving. They were made sorrowful. Jesus noticed that. And he said in John 16:20, "You are weeping, and lamenting, or you shall weep and lament", especially after

Jesus was killed, “but the world shall rejoice and you shall be sorrowful”, but look, “Your sorrow will be turned into joy”. In verse 21, “A woman when she is in travail has sorrow because her hour is come. But as soon as she gives birth to the child she forgets her anguish because of her joy that a man is born into the world”.

Verse 22, And you guys, “you” plural, you all now, therefore; have sorrow. The word therefore connects their condition to what Jesus was just describing. “You now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again. And your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man can take from you”. Now think about this, “your sorrow shall be turned into joy”. Notice that the parable of the woman in travail immediately follows Jesus’ comment about “your sorrow shall be turned into joy”.

A parable in the mouth of Jesus always fits perfectly the situation. Here he’s describing a woman coming to the hour of birth, because the disciples were coming to the hour of their spiritual birth. And so Jesus talks about birth and woman’s sorrow being turned into joy because there is a birth. And he tells them they are coming to their joy too. They are going to have to go through their most difficult times, their most painful moments in this spiritual pregnancy. But just beyond that most painful time is their greatest joy.

When Jesus said, “I will see you again”, he was speaking not merely of his resurrection, but speaking of the effect that his resurrection would have on those disciples. As the disciples drew near the time for their spiritual birth they became sorrowful because Jesus said he was going away. But they became sorrowful because the comforter had not yet come. They were sorrowful for that, but Jesus knew that after he arose from the dead and ascended to the Father, that the Father was going to give him his request for their souls and that He would pour out joy unspeakable and full of glory: the spirit of God. And when this happened, so much joy was poured out on these disciples, that the on-lookers, there in Jerusalem, accused them of being drunk and they were drunk, but it was on a new kind of wine. Isn’t Jesus, by saying all this to his disciples, telling them that they were not yet born again? Isn’t that reasonable? Isn’t that a reasonable conclusion?

Just as the woman had not come to the time of her birth and that’s why she was sorrowful and in such pain; so the disciples, while Jesus was living with them, had not come to their birth and they were very sorrowful when he told them that he was about to die. Now during this very same last supper scene, the disciples were sitting around Jesus at the table and they were telling Jesus how devoted they were to him. And Jesus told them you’re all going to forsake me this night; you’re going to leave me alone. Peter spoke up and said, “No sir, I will die for you.” And all the disciples joined in after that.

But Jesus was not confused by what they said. He said you’re going to deny me three times before the rooster crows, Peter. He said, “Satan has desired to have you Peter, but I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail”. Now, this is the Simon Peter that Jesus called from his fishing boat; the same one that walked on the water. The one that had cast out devils using the power Jesus had given him. The same Peter who had healed the sick; the same one who stood with Jesus over three years of ministry and suffered the persecution and hatred that came from that.

But notice what Jesus is about to say to this disciple. At the end of verse 32 in Luke 22 Jesus said, “Peter, when you are converted, I want you to strengthen your brothers.” “When you are converted.” In other words, Peter was not converted; he was not born again. Many have taught or just assumed that the disciples were converted some time during Jesus’ ministry because they confessed they believed in him and professed that they knew him. They suffered with Jesus and they believed that he was from God, but they were not born again.

Now look, there may be confusion in some of our minds, when we let our reasoning capacities go where it may without being based on the revelation of God. We can confuse ourselves and each other. There may be confusion in our minds as to when the New Birth is, but there is no confusion in the mind of Jesus. Jesus is not confused by what we think. He was not confused by what the disciples thought; nor is he confused by the great theologies of the great denominations or the great evangelist of our time.

Jesus overcame the world; he is not a victim of it. He loved his disciples and he prayed for his disciples; he died for his disciples. But he was not fooled as to whether they were born again or not. He knew they were not.

In Matthew 18:1, Jesus had to deal again with his disciples debating over who was going to be second in command in this kingdom they thought Jesus was about to set up on earth. They frequently got into arguments, quarrels even, about who was going to be the greatest in Jesus kingdom when he threw the Romans out and set up his kingdom. Even during the last supper in Luke we are told about that.

But here in Matthew 18, is another time when they were quarrelling about it and Jesus said to them in Matthew 18, “I say unto you, except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. He was not speaking philosophically here. The ‘you’ there is plural. He’s talking to the group of his disciples. “Unless you guys are born again, you’re never going to see the kingdom of heaven”. He knew they were not born again. They were not born again because it has been revealed to us that the New Testament or the new birth had not been given yet. Remember Hebrews 9?

A testament is in effect after men are dead. Jesus was born under the law to bring it to its end, which he did. And in the new covenant, which comes into effect after the death of the testator, people are born again. But it was not available so long as Jesus lived because it was his death; resurrection, ascension, and offering that make it available.

We have to have faith in Jesus and his deeds, in order to experience the new birth. Think about that. The disciples did miracles. They trusted that Jesus was sent from God and still they were not born again. That’s why Jesus told them in John 16, “I must go away.” He must go away because we must be born again. And we could not be born again unless he went away. So, we know for certain, we know for certain, based on God’s revelation and simple reasoning that He’s given us to use, that the disciples were not born again during the time that Jesus lived with them on the earth.



And there's a couple more scriptures before I close this short session that I want to point out to you. One is in Romans, chapter 8 verse 9, where Paul said, "If any man does not have the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him." Now Jesus, talking to his disciples during the last supper, said this, "If you love me, keep my commandments and I will ask the father and he will give you another comforter (he's talking about the spirit) that he may abide with you forever".

And then he continued at the end of verse 17 to say this, listen, "For the spirit of God, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. Now if Paul said, "If a man does not have the spirit of Christ within him, he doesn't belong to him, and Jesus was telling his disciples, "the spirit is with you, but it shall be in you", then when Jesus was talking with them, the spirit wasn't in them, they were none of his.

Jesus, here, was hinting at the fact that God was about to create a new nation and we have to belong to that new nation that's created by the spirit in order to belong to him. Now we know that they were under the Old Covenant, the disciples were under the Old Covenant when Jesus was talking to them, so they belong to God but there was a change coming. Jesus, said at one point, "Father they were yours, but you have given them to me."

Jesus, through the power of the spirit was about to create a new Israel and he was telling those who wanted to hear it, "You must be born into this new Israel." And the way to be born into this new Israel, according to what Paul says and Jesus and others that we'll see, is to receive that spirit that God would send after Jesus offered himself for the sins of the world. Jesus was saying to his disciples, when he said "he's with you, but he will be in you," that they had not received the spirit yet.

If we would find out God's answer to 'when were the disciples born again', we must discover when did they receive the spirit of God. To ask, "when were the disciples born again", is to ask "when did they receive the spirit"? Because receiving the spirit is belonging to God; it's being born again into that new nation. It's having your sins washed away. So when did that happen to the disciples? We'll look at that next time in our third lesson in the series of "The New Birth."

We're continuing our study of "When were the disciples born again?" as a part of this series on The New Birth. Have you ever thought about when the disciples were born again? I've asked a number of people that over the years, and usually the answer is, no, they've never really thought about it. People generally assume that they were born again when Jesus called them and they followed. But as we saw last time, that couldn't have been the case. When did the disciples receive something from God that they knew was a new birth?

We read last time from John 16 where Jesus compared the spiritual condition of his disciples at that time with the condition of a woman drawing near to the hour of giving birth. He said in John 16:20, "You shall weep and lament (because I'm going away), but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." He knew that when they were born again, they would be made very happy.

So we see that at the time when Jesus was nearing the end of his earthly ministry, he was telling them that the time for their new birth was drawing near, too. We read in Romans 8, where Paul

said “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ (inside of him, that is), he is none of his (he doesn’t belong to God yet).” And we consider that the disciples did not have the Spirit inside of them; Jesus said so. He told them in John 14 that the Spirit was with them, but it was not yet in them.

And we learned that the reason that the Spirit was not yet in his disciples was that Jesus had not yet made the sacrifice that God required. The sacrifice of the Lamb of God had to be made in order for the Spirit to be made available. Now, in John 16, right after he describes the spiritual condition of his disciples as being like that of a woman drawing near to the time for giving birth, he tells his disciples in verses 23 and 24, “In that day (in the day that you are born again) you shall not ask me anything.

Truly I say to you, whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you.” But listen to this in verse 24: he tells his disciples “Up ‘til now, you have asked the Father nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, so that your joy may be full.” Jesus is telling the disciples that up to this point, they have not had the power to ask the Father anything in the name of Jesus for themselves; they don’t have communion with the Father yet; they don’t know the Father yet.

Now, after the Spirit came into them, they were actually glad that Jesus had gone away. Before it came, they were sad that he was gone away. After it came, their sorrow was turned into joy. When they began to walk in the Spirit and think in the Spirit and speak in the Spirit, they actually had more fellowship with Jesus than when he had been physically with them. While he was here on earth, they never really understood what Jesus was doing.

While he was walking around on earth in the flesh with them, they never understood his doctrine. They never really understood why he was the way he was. It was only after Jesus departed and the Spirit came and entered into them that they possessed the wisdom and the power and the love of God to understand what Jesus had been all about. If you could get back in time, when Jesus lived and walked on the earth, and stand there and look him in the face, Jesus would rebuke you; he’d wonder what was wrong with you.

He would ask you, “Why do you want to be back here with me?” You see, we have the opportunity of living in a time when the Spirit won’t be just with us, it will be in us. Jesus paid the price for that. We don’t want to go back and walk with him in the flesh, because everybody who walked with him in the flesh could not understand him; they didn’t know God; they didn’t have the Spirit in them. He came here to die so that we could have the Spirit of life. We, who walk in the Spirit, understand Jesus better than the disciples did when they were walking with him in the flesh. We have more fellowship with Christ in the Spirit now that Peter, James, and John did before the Spirit came. We have a greater opportunity to know God, to know His mind, to know His will, than the disciples had before the Spirit came. This is a better time to live. When Jesus said, “In that day, you shall ask in my name”, he was saying that when the Spirit came into them, you will have fellowship with the Father yourself.

And then he explained in John 16:27, “For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved me, and because you have believed that I came from God.” Jesus’ greatest desire was that those who believed on him would receive the same Spirit and have it in them; the same Spirit he had

himself received from the Father. But he had to die, and be resurrected, and go away, ascend to the Father, and present himself to the Father for that to happen.

Why couldn't the Spirit enter into people before Jesus died, or while Jesus was here with them? Because God had not given it. And why had God not given it? Because He required a sacrifice for sins that was greater than animals. Animal sacrifice would not have caused God to give us of His Spirit and wash away our sins; it took the sacrifice of His Son. Jesus stood up in Jerusalem one day in a great day of the feast – a lot of people were there – and he cried out, “He who believes on me, just as the Scripture has said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”

Now, that was a parable and that was a mystery to the people who were hearing him. But John, writing his book after the Spirit came, understood then what Jesus really meant; and he explained it to us in John 7:39. John said, “But he said this (about this flowing rivers of living water coming out of our innermost being) he spoke this concerning the Spirit, which those who believed on him should receive.”

Well, why hadn't they received it? John explains, “because the holy Ghost was not yet given.” Why? John explains, “because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Nobody had the holy Ghost indwelling them – God didn't give it to people – until after Jesus was glorified – not crucified (remember he had to die; that was necessary) – but he had to be resurrected.

Resurrection was necessary, but that's not all; he had to ascend to the Father, and that wasn't all; he had to offer himself to the Father for the sins of the world, and when he did and when the Father accepted it, he was glorified with the same glory he had before the foundation of the world; and when he was glorified in heaven, the Father sent back the Spirit to those who believed in Jesus as a testimony of what happened. The Spirit comes as a witness that Jesus is Lord and that he has been glorified, and that he is sitting at the right of the Father.

And John said this is what Jesus was talking about when he said “river of living water will flow out of you”. Jesus had to be accepted by God for the sins of the world as a sacrificial lamb. Then the Spirit returned to the disciples waiting for it. Then they began to have their own communion and fellowship with the Father in the name of Jesus. And this last thing, that God had to accept Jesus' sacrifice, is really the last thing that had to happen so that the Spirit would be given to us, and no longer just be with us.

So Jesus had to die; he had to be raised from the dead; he had to ascend to the Father, and offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins. But that's not all that was required; the very last thing that had to happen, so that the Spirit would be given, is that the Father had to accept the sacrifice. And of course He did, because the sacrifice was sinless. And when the sinless sacrifice of the Son of God was accepted, and Jesus asked the Father for us to give us of His Spirit, the holy Ghost came. Jesus said in John 10:10, “*I am here on earth; I have come so that they might have life, and that they have it more abundantly.*” And Paul explained in Romans chapter 8 what life really is. He said, “*The Spirit of God is life.*” So what Jesus was really saying in John 10:10 is: I have come that they might have the Spirit, and have it abundantly. In other words, inside, instead of outside. I am come that they might have that eternal Spirit of life that the Father has given to me.

And he said in another place that *“the Father has given me authority to pass on this life, to give to whomsoever I will.”* Jesus wanted us to receive that promise of the Father. And after his resurrection, right before he ascended into heaven, he told his disciples that’s what he wanted for them. He went with them up to the East of Jerusalem, up on the Mount of Olives, and when he was assembled there with him, it says in Acts 4, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, *“you’ve heard about from me”*. And the disciples did receive that promise in just a few days, on the day of Pentecost. And that’s why, only after the books of Acts, in chapter 2, do you hear the disciples, or read from the disciples about being born of the Spirit. They couldn’t speak of it before; only Jesus could tell them about being born again. Only Jesus could refer to the Spirit of life, because the disciples didn’t know anything about it. It was a mystery to them.

But after it came, in Acts chapter 2, after Jesus ascended and offered himself and the Father accepted it, and sent back the Spirit, then the disciples began to tell others about being born of the Spirit, about having sins washed away, about the new covenant in the blood of Jesus. Peter could not possibly have written what he wrote in his first book before the day of Pentecost. He wrote that, *“God has given us all things that pertain to life and Godliness.”* Those words were impossible for Peter before he was born again on the day of Pentecost. The disciples went from being not born again, to being born again in Acts chapter 2. They went from having the Spirit with them, to having the Spirit in them in Acts chapter 2 when the Spirit came.

Jesus had talked and talked and talked to them about the Spirit that was coming and they didn’t understand what he was saying, but he understood what he was saying. And he knew that word from God was getting into their heart and that it would keep them from being too discouraged after he left; it would keep them from being too discouraged so they wouldn’t tarry at Jerusalem. Over and over he reminded them. He tried so hard to impress on them the importance of the coming Comforter.

He told them in John 14, *“The Comforter, which is the holy Ghost, that the Father will send in my name, he’s going to teach you all things, and bring everything to your remembrance that I have said to you.”* John 15, *“When the Comforter is come that I will send from the Father; even the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he is going to testify about me.”* In John 16, *“It is necessary for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Comforter won’t come.”* Over and over again, Jesus promised the disciples that he would send them the Spirit.

After his resurrection, he stayed with his disciples, in the flesh, on earth, 40 days. And we know that he was in the flesh, because he said so. They thought when he had appeared in their midst, Luke tells us, that they had seen a ghost. That they were looking at a Spirit, Jesus said, *“A spirit doesn’t have flesh and bone as you see that I have.”* He was still in that natural body still had holes in it. When he was glorified, those holes went away. A glorified body is not a damaged body, it’s a new, heavenly body, that cannot suffer, that has no defects.

He stayed with his disciples 40 days in the flesh, discussing with them about the kingdom of God, reminding them that the Spirit was coming. Even if they didn’t understand it, it was having an affect in their hearts that would help them when he went away to the Father. At the end of

that 40 days, he went with them outside the city of Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives as we said, and he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for that promise of the Father. Jesus referred to the holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, as the promise of God. It had been promised through the prophets: Isaiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. They all spoke of a coming promise. Joel, *“I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.”* And in Acts chapter 2, when the day of Pentecost was fully come, we read, all of Jesus’ disciples, the faithful ones anyway, had not departed from Jerusalem because Jesus told them not to. And they heard a mighty sound, like a tornado. It wasn’t a tornado, and it wasn’t a great wind; it was a sound coming from heaven. And that sound came and filled the place where they were sitting and each one was filled with the holy Ghost, each one was baptized with the holy Ghost. And on that day, their great sorrow at the loss of Jesus was turned into joy, because they were born! They had been admitted into the kingdom of God, they had been baptized with the holy Ghost, and that is to be born again.

When Jesus told them to go to Jerusalem and tarry for the promise, he told them also, *John baptized with water, that’s right, he did that, but you shall be baptized with the holy Ghost in just a few days.* That’s what happened in the next chapter of Acts, chapter 2. This is what Jesus called being born again, receiving the promise of the Father, receiving the Spirit, receiving life: the baptism of the holy Ghost. The book of Hebrews refers to the old men of faith, the Old Testament holy men and women. And it says they all died without receiving the promise. They all died in faith, they all died with a good report, but they died without receiving the promise. But in this new covenant, in the name of Jesus, we receive the promise and that promise is, the new birth: the holy Ghost baptism.

We receive in this new covenant the promise that those Old Testament men and women could not have because Jesus had not come, and died, and been raised up and ascended to the Father and offered himself as the sacrifice for our sins and been accepted of the Father. They couldn’t receive it because the sacrifice had not been accepted yet. The disciples were born again when they received the baptism of the holy Ghost and spoke in tongues in Acts chapter 2. That’s the only reasonable and right answer to the question: When were the disciples born again?

## **What was the Spiritual Condition of the Disciples**

### **Before the Day of Pentecost?**

In the last part of our series on the New Birth we saw that the disciples were not born again until Acts 2. This means their sins were not washed away until Acts 2. They were not in the kingdom of God until Acts 2. They didn’t have the spirit within them until Acts 2. But what was their spiritual condition before they were born again in Acts 2? We know they weren’t wicked men otherwise the spirit would not have come into them in Acts 2. Rather than just speculate, let’s use the scriptures to see what Jesus says about their spiritual condition before they were born again. That way we can base our thinking on the revelation of God.

What was the spiritual condition of the disciples before they were born again on the day of Pentecost? The disciples were not considered by Jesus to be sinners, but we know by the revelation of God, they were not born again till the day of Pentecost.

What does the Bible say, what did Jesus say about it?

We're going to concentrate in this section of the new birth series on the 'Last Supper' in John. There, Jesus is having a long discourse with his disciples, and we are blessed to have this because he tells us plainly what the spiritual condition of those who followed him was before their new birth.

So we'll start with John 13 where Jesus says in verse 10 'you are clean'. He's talking about his disciples, and he's talking about them spiritually. Spiritually, they were clean. They had repented. They had followed Jesus. They had listened to his words. They had obeyed his commandments. And they were clean. But he also said later, in this same night, that they were not sanctified. You see, they were clean in an 'Old Testament' sense. If you don't understand that Jesus had to die, and be resurrected, and ascend to the Father, and offer himself. If you don't understand the Father had to accept that sinless sacrifice in order for the spirit to come, then you might fall into that old trap, and be among the number who think that just because Jesus showed up on earth, the Old Covenant was over. You might assume, as many do, that just because he called his disciples to follow him, that they were born again. But of course by now if you've kept up with us through this series, you know that is not possible.

Paul tells us in Galatians 4 that Jesus was born under the law. That, Jesus kept the law perfectly, he was sinless, he was blameless concerning the law. He was circumcised under the law. He was baptized with John's baptism under the law. He kept the feast days that the law required him to keep. And the sacrifices, when he healed the lepers, he told them "go make the sacrifices Moses commanded" because the law was still in effect. He was born, he lived and he died, under the law. The disciples were also born under the law. They also kept the law. They followed Jesus' examples. They were not contemptuous of the law of Moses, they loved it. They obeyed it, just as their master did while he was in the flesh as a Jew on earth. But they were not sanctified. In John 15:3 Jesus said to them, "you are clean, through the word I have spoken unto you". They were not in a bad spiritual condition, and neither are you, if you have obeyed the word that Jesus has spoken to you.

If you have believed the gospel of Jesus, if you have turned from the filthiness of this world, and your own stubborn ways, if you have begun to pursue after righteousness, to pray, to do good to your neighbor, to read the scriptures and believe them, you are not in a bad spiritual condition. You are in a good spiritual condition, even if you have not come to the hour of your new birth. In your case, if you haven't received the baptism yet, and yet you have trusted Jesus and loved him, Jesus could say to you, "you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" but only in a natural sense. You have not been sanctified yet.

In John 13:10 as we've said, and John 15:3 Jesus told them they were clean, but in John 17 he's praying to the Father and he prays "Father sanctify them through your truth, your word is truth". In John 17:19 he says "and for them I consecrate myself so that they may be sanctified by the

truth". And "the spirit is truth", John said later in 1 John 5:6, and Paul said in his letter to the believers in Rome, "we are sanctified by the holy Ghost". It's the spirit of truth that sanctifies us after we are cleansed from our own ways; after we stop doing our own will and start pursuing the will of God.

So, the spiritual condition of the disciples, before their baptism with the holy Ghost, before their new birth, was good: but not holy. They were clean: but not sanctified. And it was necessary for them to be clean, that's part of repentance: is cleaning up your ways, "making straight paths for His feet", as John said. When John the Baptist came he began to preach to people, "make straight paths for his feet, He's coming". He means 'repent'. He means 'clean-up'. 'Prepare' for the new birth, even though he didn't know what he was saying any more than the disciples did or the Old Testament prophets when they testified about the glory of Jesus.

Under the Old Covenant then, the disciples were clean. And only those who were clean in the sight of God, under the Old Covenant, were allowed to receive the cleansing, sanctifying blood of Christ into their hearts on the day of Pentecost. They would not be allowed to be there, in that room, on the day of Pentecost to be sanctified by the holy Ghost if they were not already clean in a Old Covenant sense.

You are going to believe the gospel and repent before your born again. The believing is not the new birth. The repenting is not the new birth. The new birth is God's response to your believing and your repenting. You must believe that Jesus is the Christ in order to even come to him for forgiveness of sin. Heb. 11:6 says "but without faith it is impossible to please him: for he who comes to God must believe that God exists". Believing that Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God; believing that he died on the cross for your sins. Believing that he rose the third day. Believing that he's the messiah doesn't make you born again. That just means that you know where to go to be born again. Believing in your heart that Jesus is Lord, will lead you to the new birth, but it is not the new birth.

You're not born again just because you repeat a scripture; just because you say something. You must believe that God is there waiting for you in order to come to him for the baptism of the holy Ghost, for the remission of sins, for the forgiveness of your sins, for the washing away of your sins. You must believe that he is, as Hebrews tells us. And you must believe that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him. Didn't Jesus say, ask, and seek, and knock. Well you've got to believe that he's the Lord of all in order to 'seek' in the right place, in order to 'knock' at the right door, in order to 'ask' the right one, for forgiveness of sins.

Hearing the gospel preached, feeling conviction of spirit on your life, praying and confessing your sins, is not the new birth. That is repentance. That is the conviction that leads you to the experience of the baptism of the holy Ghost which is the new birth. So the first point we need to know about the disciple's spiritual condition before their baptism is that they were clean but not sanctified. You are clean too, if you have obeyed the word of God and are seeking his favor.

Now there are 7 particular points I want to get across about the spiritual condition of the disciples before their spiritual baptism. And these 7 points are mentioned by Jesus at that last supper.

The first one is that Jesus said you are clean through the word that I have spoken to you. But, Jesus prayed that they would be sanctified. So the disciples were clean but they were not holy, they were not sanctified. That would have happened only on the day of Pentecost.

The second point Jesus said in John 14 to his disciples ‘you believe in God’. We have to say they were believers. And yet they were not believers in a New Testament sense, Jesus mentioned several times to them that they were not believing yet, and yet He knew they believed in God, and they believed in him. In John 14:29, for example, He was telling them about things that were coming in the future, and he said “*I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.*” At the end of John 6, they said “*now we believe and know that you’re the Christ, the Son of God*“, and Jesus told them, “*...haven’t I chosen you all and one of you is a slanderer, one of you is a devil?*”

Several times in the gospels they professed to believe, even this night in the last supper, now we believe, and Jesus said, Do you now believe?, I tell you, you’re all going to forsake me this night. So there is a believing before receiving, and after receiving, there’s a believing that was impossible before you received. They believed in God, but they were not New Testament believers yet. Jesus said both, they believed, but they didn’t believe. He knew that they in their hearts believed that God sent him. They believed that God gave Moses the law. They believed the things that they knew from God. But there were things they didn’t know, and didn’t experience, that they couldn’t believe in yet. But they would, after they were born again, and so will you.

The third thing, Jesus said, the Father loves you because you have loved me. Now the word love there doesn’t mean the kind of love that comes through the holy Ghost, it’s the love as a friend, it’s the Greek word that means to hold as a friend. In my translation of the new testament, I have it this way, “for the Father himself considers you his friends because you have been my friends.” There’s a kind of love that’s possible to have for God and for Jesus without the holy Ghost. But there is also a kind of love, that comes only through the baptism of the holy Ghost, and you can’t have that kind of saving love for God and the Son of God, without the holy Ghost.

Paul said in Romans 5:5 “*the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost that God has given to us.*” In John 17:6, the same night that he told them they loved the Father with the human kind of friendship love, he said to them, praying to his Father, he said “*Father I have made your name known to them, and I will make it known to them, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them.*” So they loved Jesus, as in a natural way, as a friend, and they dearly held him in their hearts, but the love of God was not in them. If it had been in them, Jesus wouldn’t had been praying that the Father would put it in them.

So, let’s move on to the fourth thing. In John 17:6 we are told that they belonged to God. He said to his Father in his prayer in John 17, “*Father, they were yours and you gave them to me.*” So they belonged to God because they were Jews, they were old testament people of God. But they did not have the Spirit inside of them, and we’ve already seen in an earlier lesson that Paul said if you don’t have the Spirit inside of you, you don’t belong to God. There was a transfer made. If you were a natural Jew in the old testament, you belonged to God, but now your natural



birth means nothing. You must be born again. Isn't that what Jesus said? And when you're born again, the Spirit comes in you, and then you belong to God because you belong to Jesus. They were yours Father, and you gave them to me.

Number five, John 17, Jesus said this...verse 8, "*Father, they truly do know that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me.*" He said this again in verse 25, "*righteous Father, although the world does not know you, I know you, and these men know that you sent me.*" So they believed that God sent Jesus. But Jesus also said that same night that they really didn't know him. John 14:7-9, this is what we read, He told his disciples, "*...if you had known me, you would have known my Father also.*" Philip said to him, "*Lord, show us the Father and it's enough for us...*", and Jesus said, "*...have I spent so much time with you Philip, and yet you do not know me?*" They didn't really know the Lord, they didn't have fellowship with his mind. They didn't understand his purpose, and they couldn't, because the Spirit had to come to guide them into all truth. The Spirit had to come to give them fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

Number six, and this is very instructive. Jesus said in John 15:19, "*if you were of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, I have chosen you out of the world.*" In his prayer to his Father later, He said, "*Father, they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*" That's where you are, if you're following Jesus. The world isn't following after Jesus. The world isn't seeking the truth. The world isn't listening to me teach. You are, because you want to know what's right. And if you want to know what's right from God, if your heart is really after the right thing, you are not of the world.

But if you have not received the new birth yet, if you have not received the baptism of the holy Ghost yet, you still are not in Christ. You are not of the world, but you are not in Christ. And that's exactly what Jesus said about his disciples. He said they were not of the world, but in John 17, he prayed to the Father that "*...they may be in me, as I am in you Father, and you are in me.*" John 17:21, he prayed that they may all be united, "*...just as you Father are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us. So that the world may believe that you sent me.*"

And the last thing. The seventh thing about their spiritual condition that Jesus himself said, he said, that they were chosen and ordained. In John 15:16, "*...you have not chosen me for yourselves, but I have chosen you for myself, and I have ordained you.*" So they were chosen and ordained by Jesus, but they still were not born again. Listen to what else he said about them. In John 16:12-13, he said, "*I still have much to tell you, but you are not now able to bear it...*" They were chosen by God. They were ordained to eventually preach the gospel for themselves under the power of the Spirit, with the holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But they could not even bear to hear truth that Jesus wanted them to have. "*I still have much to tell you, but you are not now able to bear it. But when He, the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.*"

After they were born again, then they could bear the truth; the powerful truth of God. Not the least of which, is to say if you don't have the Spirit, you don't belong to God, whether you're a Jew or a Gentile. And another thing Jesus said, that we've already read in an earlier lesson, that they had never in their lives, ever of themselves asked the Father anything in Jesus' name. And he said in John 16:23-26, that when they were born again, they would be able to do that.

Now let me review very quickly the seven points about the spiritual condition of the disciples before they were born again on the day of Pentecost.

1. They were clean, but they were not sanctified. Jesus said both.
2. They believed in God, but they did not believe in a new covenant sense. Jesus said both.
3. They loved Jesus in a natural, friendly kind of way, but the love of God was not in them. Jesus said both.
4. They belonged to God, but they did not have the Spirit in them. So they didn't belong to God in a New Testament sense. Jesus said both of these things about his disciples.
5. They believed that God had sent Jesus, but they did not know Jesus. Jesus said both of these things.
6. They were not of the world, but they were not in Christ. Jesus said both of these things.
7. And last of all, they were chosen and ordained, but they could not bear to hear the truth. Nor had they ever asked the Father anything in Jesus' name.

They were like unborn children in the womb of the kingdom of God. And they were nearing the hour of birth until it came in Acts 2. This is the spiritual condition of the disciples before their new birth. And it's the condition of people now, who are seeking the truth, and have not yet received that new birth experience of the baptism of the holy Ghost.

## **What is the Promise of the Father?**

In this part of the New Birth series we want to consider what is the promise of the Father? What is what the Bible calls, what Jesus called, the promise. In Hebrews 11 after listing the heroic deeds of the mighty men and women of faith under the first covenant the author of Hebrews says this about them. He said, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, they died having not received the promise."

What is the promise that those Old Testament people of faith, good people, righteous people, did not receive? What is the promise that David died without having received from God? What is the promise that Abraham and Moses and Noah died without? What is the promise of the Father?

Jesus mentioned it in Acts, the first chapter. In that chapter he tells his disciples to go back to Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Father. The scene here is after the resurrection of Jesus but before he ascended. He spent forty days with them in a natural body talking to them about things concerning the kingdom of God. Now they didn't understand the things Jesus was telling them about. They couldn't have, because the Spirit was still with them, it was not in them. Nevertheless, Jesus would speak of things to come so that when those things came the disciples who were going to receive those things might know that he is Lord and he knew what was coming.

He told them, "I'm telling you these things so that when they happen you will believe." And now here in Acts chapter one he's told them for forty days now after his resurrection about the kingdom of God that they were soon to enter into. He was assembled together then with his

disciples on the Mount of Olives ready to ascend into heaven and return to the Father and he spoke to them one final commandment, “that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father concerning which you have heard from me.”

He was saying here, ‘I have told you repeatedly about the promise of the Father and it’s coming. Go to Jerusalem now and wait for it. You will receive it not many days from now.’ Then he added in Acts 1:5, “John truly baptized with water but you will be baptized with the holy Ghost not many days from now.” So the time has come for the promise of the Father and Jesus called it not only the promise of the Father but the baptism of the holy Ghost. So we know that the promise of the Father is the baptism of the holy Ghost.

Now in Galatians chapter 3 Paul mentions this promise. He said that the promise of the Spirit was received through Jesus Christ through faith. Galatians 3:13: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us, as it is written ‘Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree,’ so that the blessing of Abraham might come on us Gentiles through Jesus Christ that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Now Jesus in Acts was saying that the promise of the Father was about to come. He’s reminding his disciples of all the times before when he told them that the Comforter was coming, the Spirit of truth, meaning the holy Ghost. So the promise in Jesus’ terms is the baptism of the holy Ghost. The promise as Paul uses it is the Spirit of God. So we know they’re the same thing. Receiving the promise, receiving the Spirit, receiving the baptism of the holy Ghost, it’s all the same. And the disciples did not have the promise of the Father before they received the baptism of the holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.

Now there are a large number of believers that have been taught that the disciples received the Spirit before they received the promise of the Father or the baptism of the holy Ghost in Acts chapter 2. And these teachers who are very misguided point to John chapter 20 as evidence that they did receive the Spirit before Jesus ascended. So let’s look at that.

Let’s look at John chapter 20 now and the verses that many point to, to show that the disciples received the Spirit before Jesus ascended to the Father. The disciples now were hiding in a room because they feared the Jews who had had Jesus arrested and killed, and they feared the Romans who would carry out the will of Jews, but especially they feared the elders of the Jews who hated the truth so much that they would even have Stephen stoned later without permission from the Romans.

They knew what the elders had done to Jesus and they knew that if they were caught it was very possible the same fate awaited them. So while they were hiding in this room all of a sudden Jesus appeared to them, and he appeared to them in a natural body. I’ve had people ask me how could he be in a natural body and just appear in a room? The power of God can cause you to do anything. How could Jesus walk on the water in a natural body?

In the book of Acts, Phillip was in a natural body when the Spirit of God transported him a long ways from the road down in Gaza all the way up to where the Samaritans lived. So appearing in a room or being transported by the holy Ghost does not mean that you’re in a spiritual body.

Remember the prophet Ezekiel was transported all the way from the territory around Babylon across the Arabian desert into Jerusalem by the Spirit.

So Jesus appearing in a room does not mean he's already glorified in a spiritual body. It just means that he appeared in the room. They thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus said, "A ghost does not have flesh and bone as you see me have." A spiritual body is not made of flesh. He was telling them, 'I'm not glorified yet.' Jesus appeared and he said, "Peace be unto you. As my Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

Now think about that. Jesus said, 'The Father sent me and just like that I am sending you.' But what did not happen? What did not happen is that the disciples did not jump up and run out and go preaching, because they were not yet sent. Jesus was just ordaining them to be sent. Jesus was not actually sending them at that moment. He was just telling them what he was about to do. You might say he was ordaining them to be sent. And they were sent after they were born again in Acts chapter 2.

Now in John 20 verse 22 - and this is the main verse that some have taken as evidence that Jesus gave the Spirit to his disciples before he ascended: "When he had said this he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the holy Ghost.'" Now they did not receive the holy Ghost in this verse any more than they were sent in the previous verse. Jesus is just telling them what was going to happen to them.

Now if they received the Spirit when Jesus said, "Receive ye the holy Ghost," if they already had the Spirit in Acts chapter 1 and 2, if they received it here in John 20, then what is the promise of the Father that Jesus mentions in Acts 1 that he wants them to receive? Whatever - if they received anything - whatever they received here in John 20 wasn't good enough. Otherwise they wouldn't have been commanded to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father before they went out preaching.

But they didn't receive anything here in John 20 except an ordination, a blessing, a promise that they were going to receive the promise. We must go from revelation to reason. We cannot begin to reason and make our own doctrines and ignore the revelation. We've got to build on what God has said. And you know by now if you've been with us through this study that no one, the disciples or anyone else, was ever possibly born again before Jesus died and was raised from the dead and ascended to the Father and offered himself to the Father for our sins and was accepted of the Father and set down at His right hand. We know that every one of those things had to happen before the promise of the Spirit was given.

We must begin with revelation and then use our reason. We must go with the revelation that tells us Jesus said to his disciples to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. And we must start with the revelation that Paul gave us that the promise is the Spirit.

Going from that revelation, we understand by our reason that Jesus was not giving the spirit to the disciples in John 20 he gave it to the disciples in Acts chapter 2 and he called it the baptism of the spirit or the promise of the Father or receiving the holy Ghost. However you want to say it all those things are in the scripture. That is revelation and that is where we start building right

doctrine. And as I said if the disciples already had the spirit before the day of Pentecost then what is the promise? The promise of the Father is the Spirit.

In Ephesians the first chapter, Paul mentions what the Spirit does to those who receive it, in other words, those who are baptized with the holy Ghost as the disciples were in Acts chapter 2. He told them there speaking of Christ, in whom you also trusted after that you heard the word of the truth the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that you believed you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

Receiving the spirit, being baptized with spirit, being sealed with the spirit, receiving the promise, it's all the same thing. No one receives the spirit and later are baptized with spirit and begin to speak in tongues. It's just not in the scriptures. Jesus himself, by the way, was sealed by the spirit at the river of Jordan. In John 10 he said the Father sealed me. We know, now as we have done this study, why the disciples had to wait until Pentecost to receive the spirit, the promise of the Father. We know that the Spirit could not have been given until Acts Chapter 2 when Jesus ascended to the Father and offered himself for the sins of the world.

Revelation is given to us why the Spirit could not have been given before Acts Chapter 2. You remember the scripture from John 7 where Jesus said If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink, he that believes on me, just as the scripture has said out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Then the explanation is given, but he was speaking of the spirit which those that believe on Him should receive because the holy Ghost was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

What is glorification? When was Jesus glorified? A glorified body will outshine the sun. A glorified body is a spiritual body, a celestial body, an immortal body, a body without scars, without bruises, without missing parts. When Jesus rose from the dead he still had scars from his crucifixion because he still was in that natural body. He wasn't glorified. The glorified Christ was seen by John in the book of revelation. And it made him pass out like a dead man he said. Jesus appearing in the room where the disciples were hiding frightened them but it didn't make them pass out with that glorified body that outshined the sun.

A glorified body is like this, let me read it to. Let me read what John saw in Revelation the first chapter when he caught a glimpse in a vision of the glorified Christ. He said I saw one like unto the son of man clothed with a garment down to the foot, up to the chest with a golden girdle, his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow and his eyes were as a flame of fire. His feet were like unto fine brass as if burned in a furnace, and his voice was as the sound of many waters. That is when he said in verse 17, when I saw him I fell at his feet like a dead man.

That is not the kind of body Jesus had when he rose from the dead and visited his disciples for 40 days. In Philippians chapter 3 Paul says that when Jesus returns we will be given bodies like his glorious body. Daniel prophesied that the resurrected saints would shine as the stars. Those shining bodies will have no wounds on them, no scars, no blemishes. If you've got scars on your body the way I have from injuries when I was younger, they won't be there anymore with a glorified body, blemishes are going to be gone.

When Jesus ascended into heaven he took his killed, mortal, natural body to offer it to the Father for our sins. And when the Father accepted it, he glorified the Son and gave him an eternal body. When Jesus was here on earth after his resurrection he showed his disciples the nail prints in his hands and wound in his side. And then he ascended to Father to be glorified. And when that happened the Spirit came as proof of it. That's why all those in the Old Testament who believed in God and trusted God died without receiving the promise.

They obtained their good report through faith. And they will receive new bodies and the spirit of life from God in the resurrection. But while they lived here on earth, Jesus had not yet died and been resurrected, to offer himself to God for the sins of the world. He had not ascended to the Father to be glorified and so the promise was not yet given. The Old Testament prophets and wise men did wonderful things. They were holy men, but they were without the promise, they were not born again.

The holy Ghost did fall on them to do mighty things. The prophets were moved by the holy Ghost to speak. Peter said those holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the holy Ghost. David said the spirit of the Lord spoke by me. David prophesied of the spirit of Christ to come. In Psalm 22 he said they pierced my hands and my feet. That was the spirit of Christ speaking through David, but David was not born again.

1Peter, in the first chapter we are told the Old Testament prophets prayed and wanted to know what they were saying when they were prophesying about Christ and his suffering and his glory. But the only thing God let them know, Peter said, was that they were not talking about anything that would happen in their time, they were speaking of things to come, they were speaking to a people to come, and that is us. God's spirit was on men in the old covenant, it would come on them and move them to do and say mysterious and mighty things, but they were not given the spirit to be in them, because, we are told, God would not allow it because a price had to be paid.

And they without us could not be made perfect. Jesus chose the last ones in history to be the first to receive the holy Ghost. Didn't he say the last shall be first? The ones who were God's people last were the first to receive the promise. This is a better covenant than the old one. And the better covenant came last. All the righteous men from the time of creation to the time of Pentecost had one hope. And that was that Jesus would come and pay the price for our redemption.

And you know Jesus when He was here, he mentioned that of all the men from creation to His time, of all them, there was no body ever born of woman greater than John the Baptist. And then He said the very least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist. Think about that. If you've been baptized by the holy Ghost into the kingdom of God, you're in a higher, greater place than John the Baptist, and no man was ever greater than he who has ever born up to that time.

Now Paul said in Romans 14:17, the kingdom of God is not physical things, not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. And if you've been made partaker of that promise of God, you're in a higher place with God than the greatest men who ever lived before the day of Pentecost. You can be thankful that the promise is yours. And it is unto you,

Peter said, and to your children, and to as many as be afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call.

## **Does a Person Receive the Spirit Before He is Baptized With It?**

We've already seen, in our earlier segments in this series on The New Birth, that on the day of Pentecost the disciples were born again when they were baptized with the Spirit of God. The disciples were born again on the day of Pentecost. Now we want to deal with another issue that's associated with this, and that has been brought to the fore in the last few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and that is, does a person receive the Spirit before he is baptized with it?

Now, we know from what we've already studied, by the revelation of God and using the common sense reasoning that He's given us, that the disciples did not receive the Spirit before they were baptized with it on the day of Pentecost. Were they an exception or were they the rule? Well, let's look at some examples in the book of Acts of people receiving the baptism of the holy Ghost and see what the Scriptures say about them.

We could begin with the Samaritans, to whom Philip went preaching in Acts chapter 8. We know that when he went there preaching they believed what he said. We're told that they received the word of God that Philip preached to them. He performed miracles, healing some of them; and the conviction for God came on them and they repented. Did they receive the Spirit? Or did they have to wait to receive it until Peter and John came to lay hands on them?

Well, what we're told in the Bible – in other words, the revelation upon which we must build an understanding – is that, when Peter and John came from Jerusalem to where Philip had been preaching (when the news came to Jerusalem), Peter and John came to lay hands on the Samaritans that they might receive the holy Ghost because, the Scriptures tell us (God's revelation is), that the holy Ghost had fallen upon none of them.

So they believed the word of God when it was preached. They saw the power of God when it was shown to them through Philip's hands, and his commands of his mouth working under the power of God. They believed it and they repented; but they did not receive the Spirit. Even though you might call them believers (they were believers the way the disciples were before they received the holy Ghost) they did not receive the promise of God; they did not receive the baptism of the holy Ghost; they did not receive the Spirit, until Peter and John came and laid hands on them.

What about the apostle Paul's conversion? We're often told that he was converted on the road to Damascus; but that's contrary to the revelation that we have from God. We always must have the revelation of God as our foundation. Paul's own testimonies concerning his conversion show us that, when he went to Damascus, Jesus sent a man named Ananias to Paul, who was blind – he had been blinded by the vision that Jesus had given him when Paul was on his way to Damascus to harm God's people – he was blind, and he was ashamed of himself because he found out now that he had been persecuting God's own people.

But Jesus sent Ananias – a faithful man, full of the holy Ghost – to the street called Straight to find this Saul of Tarsus (later called Paul). And the reason that Ananias was sent – his mission from Jesus – was to lay hands on this distraught man so that he could have his eyesight restored; that’s number one. And number two, that he might receive the Spirit. Now, we’ve already seen that receiving the Spirit is the new birth. And the new birth is conversion; we’ve seen that, too.

You remember when Jesus told Peter, “When you are converted, strengthen the brethren.” He told all the disciples, “Unless you are converted and become as little children, you’ll never see the kingdom of God.” So, the apostle Paul was not converted on the road to Damascus by that vision of Jesus; he was convicted of his sin on the road to Damascus. And conviction for sin and repentance always must precede the new birth.

One must believe that God is there, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. Now, Paul knew God was there and that Jesus was His Son; and he diligently sought the Lord for three days, eating and drinking nothing. Ananias then came and he laid hands on that young man, Saul of Tarsus, who was confessing his sin and turning from them; and his eyesight was restored and he received the baptism of the holy Ghost. He received God’s Spirit. He did not receive God’s Spirit – he did not have his sins washed away – he was not born again, or converted – on the road to Damascus. He received the Spirit and had his sins washed away when Ananias laid hands on him and he received the Spirit.

That’s the revelation. That’s what we are told. One time when Paul was giving his testimony, he said that Ananias came to him and said, “Now what are you waiting for young man? Arise and be baptized, washing away your sins.” The baptism of God’s Spirit washes away sins. He was repentant for his sins, but he still had them until the Spirit came in.

The same thing in Acts 19. In this chapter, Paul, as an apostle now, was traveling around and he came to a group of disciples – men who believed that Jesus was the Messiah – and he discerned that there was something missing in their lives. He discerned that, and he asked them, “Have you received the holy Ghost since you believed?” You see, there is a believing without receiving. Why didn’t – think about this, if we can get into Paul’s heart here, and get into his mind. Be reasonable now, when we read this revelation from God and ask ourselves, why did Paul say what he said? Paul said, “Have you received the holy Ghost since you believed?” Why didn’t Paul ask them – or tell them – “Well, you’ve believed, so you have the Spirit”? He didn’t tell them that.

He told them, “you have believed, but have you received since that time? Since you began to believe in Jesus, have you received the holy Ghost?” What is this question that Paul asked them? “Have you received the holy Ghost since you believed?” Paul noticed – he discerned something in the Spirit – that was absent in these disciples’ lives, and it’s absent in the lives of many believers today. If he had not noticed that something was absent, he would not have asked the question.

It doesn’t make any sense to ask this question unless the apostle Paul saw that they were missing something. They were lacking the Spirit of God. He did not believe – he did not know about the doctrine that said, “Once you believe that Jesus is your Lord, you have the Spirit.” He knew



nothing about that. In our day, much of the teaching in Christianity is that if you believe, you have already received the Spirit of God. If that were true, there would never have been a need for Paul to ask his question.

But the apostle Paul was not encumbered with the doctrines of men. He was liberated by the truth of God. He was moved by the Spirit of God. And meeting these disciples, these people who had believed that Jesus was Lord, he asked them the question, “Have you received the holy Ghost since you believed?” And this question needs to be asked today of millions of people. Have you received the holy Ghost since you believed? We ask that question of you.

I do not ask you if you have been told that you have the holy Ghost; but have you received the experience of the baptism of the holy Ghost since you believed? Now, when he said, “have you received the Spirit – have you received the holy Ghost - since you believed?”, they said, “we have not heard whether there be any such thing as the holy Ghost.” In reality, many today have not heard. They may have heard the words “holy Spirit” in some abstract, philosophical form, but they have not been informed that there is an experience of the baptism of the holy Ghost, when you can feel something and know that it’s happened to you.

Paul responded to them – and this is most instructive – when they said, “we have not so much as heard whether there be any holy Ghost”, in Acts 19:2. In Acts 19:3, Paul asked this – now let’s try to get into his mind – Paul responded, when they said, “we have not heard that there is a holy Ghost”, he asked them then, “unto what then were you baptized?” What kind of question is that in response to someone saying they’ve never heard about the holy Ghost? “Unto what then were you baptized?”

Paul was connecting receiving the holy Ghost with a baptism. Isn’t it reasonable to say that? He understood – his thinking was – that receiving the holy Ghost is the same thing as being baptized with the holy Ghost. I understand that most of the people living today who have received the baptism of the holy Ghost and with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, the way that the Bible describes it so often, have been taught that they already had the Spirit some time previous to that experience.

Paul obviously knew nothing of that kind of doctrine. He wanted to know what kind of baptism these men had received if they didn’t know about the Spirit. So we have all of these examples in the Scriptures clearly showing us that we do not receive the Spirit at some point, and then later receive the baptism of the holy Ghost. Jesus told the disciples, remember, in Acts chapter 1, that they should receive the promise for in just a few days they would be baptized with the holy Ghost.

The Samaritans believed the word and repented but they didn’t receive the holy Ghost until John and Peter came and laid their hands on them to receive the baptism of the holy Ghost. The apostle Paul did not have his sins washed away – was not born again – until Ananias came and laid hands on him to receive the holy Ghost. And here in Acts 19, the Ephesian disciples knew nothing about the holy Ghost, and received it only when Paul laid his hands on them and they received the baptism of the holy Ghost.

It says in Acts 19:6, when Paul had laid his hands on them, the holy Ghost came on them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. They did not have the Spirit - even though they were believing in Jesus – they did not have the Spirit before Paul laid his hands on them. They didn't even know about it until he told them to expect it. There was one thing Paul told these men, when he said “what kind of baptism did you receive?” They said, “Well, John's baptism”, and then Paul explained that they had not really received John's baptism.

He said, “John came preaching [he came baptizing], saying something.” John's baptism was not just a dunking in water, or a baptism in water; it was a baptism with a message about another baptism that Jesus would give. And if you hadn't heard about the baptism of the holy Ghost that Jesus gives, you really hadn't had John's baptism. So he explained to them in Acts 19:4; he said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people” – saying something, not silently, but saying something that they should believe on him that should come after him – that is, Christ Jesus.

Now, you could not have believed – truly believed – John the Baptist's preaching without being baptized by him. John baptized in the Jordan River every single person who truly believed in his message and in him as being sent from God. You cannot truly believe in Jesus and his Gospel without being baptized by him with the holy Ghost and fire. John was a pattern for Jesus. Everyone who truly believed in John received his baptism.

They didn't receive his baptism at the moment they began to believe, but their “really believing” led them to the Jordan to be baptized by him; and when we really come to believe in Jesus, we are led to the place where he will baptize us with the holy Ghost. That place may be on your knees by your bedside late at night; it may be driving in your car somewhere praying and talking to God. It's a spiritual place where Jesus meets you, and your faith reaches out to him, and he fills you with the holy Ghost; and you have not received the Spirit until he does that, even if you are believing in him before then.

That's what believing in Jesus is for; we believe in Jesus so that we will come to him and receive from him the blessing – the promise – the Spirit – the washing away of sins – the redemption – conversion – the new birth. What Jesus does for our souls, first of all, is to cleanse us. That's what receiving the holy Ghost is all about. It washes sins away. That's what the baptism of the holy Ghost is all about. It washes sins away. It's the same thing.

## **What Did Jesus Mean by "Born Again?"**

“Born again” – that's what Jesus called it. We want to study what Jesus meant by that. What could possibly be more important to our souls than to know what it means to be born again? Only once in Jesus' entire ministry do we hear Jesus saying, “ye must be born again” – just once. And it's in the conversation that he had with Nicodemus in John chapter 3. I want to take a close look at that section in the Scriptures.

Up to now we've seen that the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus had to die, and be buried, and be resurrected, and ascend into heaven, and to offer himself to the Father, and be accepted by the

Father, in order for the new birth to be made possible for us. So, it's only reasonable to say that no one was born again before Jesus ascended into heaven. There's no Scripture that literally says that; that's not the revelation.

That's the result of understanding the revelation; that's looking and believing in the Scriptures concerning Jesus' work, and then being reasonable about what we find. Here in John chapter 3, when he describes the new birth to Nicodemus, Jesus tells of something connected with the new birth that occurs every single time someone is born of the Spirit of God. When Jesus spoke about a "new birth", he was preaching a new doctrine never heard of since the world began.

He was, in fact, speaking a prophecy when he said, "you must be born again" because he was talking about something that could not be experienced while he was here in the flesh. Nicodemus was not an enemy of Jesus Christ. He was probably a believer – one of those secret believers that were living at that time. We're told in John chapter 3 that he came to Jesus by night. He was a Pharisee, and yet he said he knew that Jesus was sent from God.

In John 3, verse 2, Nicodemus said, "we know". He said "we" know. There was a group of people among the Pharisees who believed in Jesus, and that's exactly what we're told in John chapter 12, verse 42. Listen, it says, "among the chief rulers, many believed on him; but because of their fear of the Pharisees – [because they did not want to be put out of their sect] – they did not confess their faith in Jesus, lest they should be excommunicated or put out of the synagogue." And verse 43 adds this sad note: "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Are you of a similar spirit, afraid to be put out of your little group, if God shows you that His way is different from what you have been taught? Are you among the many people who will not follow after the Spirit of God in order to save face among men? There are many in that place. Make up your mind now, that whatever is right you are going to follow, if God will give you the grace to do it. It will be worth whatever it takes – whatever persecution may follow. You may be made the joke of the town, but that's okay, Jesus was too.

Those men from John chapter 12 believed in Jesus but they did not want to be put out of their religious group. They believed that Jesus was sent by God but they dared not say it, lest their fellow worshippers should mock them the way they mocked Jesus. Think about it. The men who mocked Jesus praised the prophets, but the prophets were dead. Now that Jesus is in heaven, many religious men will praise the prophets and Jesus, but deny the power of the holy Ghost that Jesus sent to take his place. What we want to do is to catch up with what God is doing right now, and praise Him for what He is giving us right now, instead of falling into the trap of praising His work in the past and denying His power in the present.

Jesus sent the Spirit back to be his vicar, to take his place. He said, "I will send you another Comforter (I am leaving, but I'm going to send something to take my place)". Only those who receive the Spirit of God – only those who submit to Jesus' baptism and receive the new birth – are real believers. It's easy to speak of holy men who aren't here now. It's easy – the flesh enjoys speaking about how great those men were. Well what about how great the holy Ghost is

now? How about what God is doing now? Anyone can glorify God for what He used to do, or what He did to others, but what about what He is offering now? That's where the real test is.

Back to that scene in John chapter 3, Nicodemus is talking to Jesus, and he told him, "We know that you are a teacher sent from God, because no one can do the miracles that you are doing, unless God is with him." Jesus ignored the flattery, and he got right to the point. In John 3, Jesus responded to Nicodemus' confession of faith in him by saying, "Unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Now, this threw Nicodemus into confusion because, as I said, Jesus was teaching a doctrine that had never been dreamed of. He was saying you had to be born again. Nicodemus asked him, was he teaching reincarnation, in verse 4: "What are you talking about?" he said, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter again the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus ignored that question, too. He knew that Nicodemus was confused, but he also knew what his Father was putting in his heart to say to him.

And he said in the next verse, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now, Jesus was not saying that there would be two baptisms connected with him. He was not saying to be baptized with water and be baptized of the Spirit. He wasn't talking about two different kinds of baptisms, he was talking about two different kinds of births. John the Baptist had a baptism in water, Jesus has his in Spirit. But Jesus wasn't saying to be born of water was to be baptized with John's baptism. He explains in the next verse what he means.

In verse 6, Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh". The birth of water is your natural birth. You have to have a natural birth in order to receive the spiritual birth. You have to be born the first time in order to be born the second time – this is basic common sense here. Let me read you verses 5 and 6; Jesus answered and said unto him, "Verily, verily I say to you except a man be born of water and of Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Nicodemus already had the first birth, because – how do you know that? Because he was sitting there; he was a human being; he had a body. Every one that's born the first time has a body. You must be born a second time. You must be born the first time in order to be born the second time; that is so simple that we stumble all over ourselves trying to understand it. He knew that Nicodemus was still stunned and questioning what was going on and Jesus told him, "Don't be amazed that I said to you 'you must be born again'."

What was he talking about? And how do you know which experience, of the many that we have with God, is this new birth? In the next verse Jesus tells us. John 3:8 has to be one of the very most important verses in the Bible, because Jesus describes the new birth. He said, "The wind blows wherever it wants to, and you hear its sound; you cannot tell where it's coming from or where it's going, but so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Now listen to that: "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." You don't know where the Spirit's coming from, you don't know who it's blessed last or who it will bless next; but you can

always hear it when it comes. The wind blows wherever it will and you hear the sound thereof, and this is how it is with every one that is born of the Spirit – so is every one born of the Spirit.

Think about this, how important this is. Jesus has given us a consistent characteristic of the new birth; he's told us of a recognizable element of being born again that is always present. It's there every time someone is born again. What is it? You hear the sound thereof. When did that ever happen? I know of one place, in Acts chapter 2 where it says, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come there were all in one accord in one place 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 they were all filled with the holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." What Jesus told Nicodemus is a perfect description of what happened to his disciples on the day of Pentecost, because it is a perfect description of the new birth.

You hear the sound thereof. Paul said in Romans 8:15, "You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry out, Abba, Father." "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit", he went on to say, "that we are the children of God." It's the Spirit's testimony that makes the difference in heaven.

John said in 1John 5:6, he said, "The Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is truth." This "crying out Abba, Father", this "Spirit confessing", this "sound of the wind" when it blows through your soul, is a physical sound – you hear it. So is everyone who's born of the Spirit. All of these Scriptures, and others like them, indicate that when a person receives the holy Ghost, he speaks in a language he has not learned, just as the disciples did when they were born again. And just as with those disciples, there are experiences with Christ that we have before that experience.

We can come to love him, to follow him, to seek to obey him, to repent of all our sins, to receive his word into our hearts, to read his Scriptures, to begin to learn to do well, to do the will of God; but all of those experiences are not the new birth. None of them is the baptism of the holy Ghost; that's the new birth. That's when you hear the sound of the Spirit speaking through you.

We do not discount any of the wonderful blessings you've had from Jesus. If you have not received the baptism of the holy Ghost yet, we do not discount what you have really had from God. We know that you must have experiences with Christ before you're born again. Those experiences are holy; they're good; they're to be desired; they're to be prayed for; it's the work of God in your heart. But it's supposed to be leading you to the wind of God blowing through your soul.

It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. This is what Jesus was describing to Nicodemus when he said you hear the sound of the wind. You don't know much else about it; you don't know where God's coming from last or where He's going to next. But with everyone born of the Spirit, you hear the sound of the Spirit when it comes.

Has that sound come through you? If not, do not be discouraged. Be thankful for everything you've received from God, and seek Him with all your heart and it is what you will receive;

because everyone that knocks, it's opened to. Everyone that asks receives. Everyone that seeks finds. Don't be discouraged; it is for you. That's why you have a desire for God.

That desire in your heart to know what is really true about Jesus didn't come from your flesh; it came from heaven. And it came from heaven to lead you to the new birth and beyond, to a life in the Spirit; a life of holiness and wisdom and love of God and truth and purity; and, in the end, eternal salvation to be with our Father in heaven. "The new birth". "Ye must be born again". Words of the Savior, who came and suffered and died and offered himself to God so that we could have it. And when we receive it, we hear the sound thereof.

## **The Blood of Christ**

In our series on the new birth we need to touch on the issue of the blood of Christ, because just as many are taught that they have received the Spirit before they received the baptism of the holy Ghost, so there are many who are taught that the blood of Christ washes their sins away before they receive the baptism of the holy Ghost or before they receive the Spirit.

We need to look, then, at what the revelation of God is concerning the blood of Christ. Let's start reading in John chapter 6 where Jesus is talking to a group of people and he begins saying in verse 48, "I am the bread of life." He said in verse 51, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread, which I shall give for the life of the world, is my flesh."

"Then the Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How is this man able to give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you do not have life in you. He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life and I will raise him up in the last day, for my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him.'"

"Just as the living Father sent me, and I am living by the Father, so also that man who eats me shall live by me." It says in verse 60 that, "When many of his disciples heard this they said, 'This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?' And Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, 'Do you take offense at this? What if you should see the Son of man ascending up to where he was before?'"

And then he adds, "It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh is completely useless. The words that I have spoken to you, they are spirit and they are life." So when Jesus was saying, "You have to eat my flesh and drink my blood in order to have eternal life," he was speaking spiritually. He was not speaking about his natural flesh and his natural blood, but they didn't understand that because they were carnally minded.

They knew the scriptures. They knew that in Leviticus 17 God had strictly commanded his people, "You shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh, for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof. Whoever eats, or drinks, blood (we would say) shall be cut off," in other words, doomed forever.

He says in 17:10, “And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers (or foreigners) that sojourn among you, who eats any kind of blood (well we would say ‘drinks’ but ‘who eats any kind of blood’), I will set my face against that soul who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people.”

So of course these disciples of Jesus, being carnally minded, did not understand him when he said, “You must drink my blood.” They kept thinking of these scriptures in Leviticus where God said, “If you drink any kind of blood I will cut you off forever.” And this shows us how true Paul’s words are in Romans 8 where he said, “To be carnally minded is death.”

If we think of Jesus’ words in a natural sense we’re likely to die. “To be carnally minded is death,” Paul said, “but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Jesus said, “The words that I’m speaking to you, they are spirit and they are life.” Well what is spiritual about telling people to eat your flesh and drink your blood? Well let’s see if we can figure this out. We have the revelation. We have what God said through Jesus. You have to drink his blood. And we have the revelation that God gave Moses.

“If you drink any kind of blood you’ll be cut off.” How do we put them together? Remember what I just read in Leviticus? God said, “You cannot drink blood because the blood is the life of the flesh.” Well think about that. The blood is what gives life to your extremities. The ends of your fingers, the ends of your toes, all over your body blood flows. If not, that part of the body dies.

Blood is what keeps your body alive. It carries oxygen and other needed things to every part of your body, all the organs, your skin. Everything is kept alive by the blood. Paul said in Romans 8:10, “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

The life of your natural, fleshly body is the natural blood that flows in it. The life of the body of Christ, God’s family on earth, is in the spiritual blood that flows through it, and that spiritual blood is the Spirit. The Spirit is life. The natural blood is the life of the natural body. The Spirit is the life of the body of Christ.

The Spirit is life and that’s what Jesus tried to explain to them when they became offended at his claim that you had to drink his blood to have life. He said, “The words that I am speaking to you, they are spirit. They’re life.” The Spirit gives life. Since the life of the body of Christ is in the Spirit, this is why the New Testament writers refer to the Spirit as the blood of Christ.

What Jesus said to them was startling only because they were thinking that he wanted them to eat his natural flesh and drink his natural blood. But that’s not what Jesus was saying and it’s not what he’s saying to you right now. The natural blood of Jesus had to be shed at Calvary because God required it. He was the Lamb of God in his human body and that lamb had to be sacrificed for our sins.

The shedding of the natural blood of Jesus was the precondition that God demanded to be met before He would allow the incorruptible blood of Christ, the Spirit, to be shed on Jesus' followers. This happened in Acts 2 on Pentecost morning. The disciples were washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb.

They were not washed from their sins in the natural blood that fell out of Jesus' natural body. That natural blood was as normal and natural and corruptible as yours and mine. Jesus' fingernails were natural fingernails. So are yours. Jesus' hair on his head, in his beard, were natural just like yours. He had a human body with human organs, human eyebrows, human toes and fingers and human blood.

The incorruptible blood of Christ was the Spirit of God that gave him life on the inside. The multitude on the day of Pentecost watching the disciples stagger under the power of God and speak in tongues, they were amazed and shocked at how Jesus' disciples were behaving. They were speaking in tongues and acting like drunk men.

Peter preached to them that day and he used words that were reminiscent of the blood imagery. He said that, "Christ," he said this, "has shed forth this that you now see and hear." Well what were they now seeing and hearing but the power of God working through men, the power of the Spirit of God giving them life on the inside the way Jesus had life on the inside?

For the first time ever, Peter and James and John and the others were drinking the blood of Christ. Peter described the pouring out of God's spirit as the shedding of the Spirit. Paul used these same terms in Titus the third chapter when he said, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration – that's the baptism of rebirth – the washing of regeneration and renewing of the holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Spirit that God has shed forth upon us is the blood of Christ, the incorruptible blood, the true blood, the blood that Jesus said we must drink if we want eternal life. Paul told the Corinthians that we've all been baptized into one body by one Spirit; we've all been made to drink of that one Spirit.

This is the blood of Christ, the Spirit of God, the blood that is still flowing today – still reaching, cleansing souls from sin. Jesus' natural human blood could never cleanse a soul from sin; it had to be shed; he had to die; it was the price that he had to pay so that the true, incorruptible blood that was in his being, giving Him life, could come to us and cleanse us from sin and give us life. The Roman soldiers surely were spattered with Jesus' natural blood during the crucifixion process, but they were not sanctified by that blood when it hit them.

His human blood was human; but inside his body there lived a Spirit from God that he called his true blood, and that he told us we had to drink. He lived by the commandments of God and he called that his true bread, and he told us we had to eat it. Our communion in the fellowship of Christ is that bread. Paul said, "We, being many, are one body and one bread."

When we bear witness to one another; when we encourage one another; when we testify to one another, we are breaking the bread of life. We are partaking of the communion that Jesus suffered and died for us to have. Think reasonably about this. Paul says in Romans 5:9 that we



are justified by the blood of Christ. Hebrews 10:29 says that we have been sanctified by the blood of Christ. We are justified, we are sanctified, and washed from our sins in the blood of Christ. But at the same time, other Scriptures tell us, that we are justified, sanctified and washed from sin by the Spirit of God.

Which way is it? Does the blood wash us from sin or does the Spirit? The Bible says both. Does the blood justify us before God or does the Spirit? Both are in the Scriptures; both are revelation. The revelation of God says that we are sanctified by the blood of Christ; and the revelation God also tells us we are sanctified by the Spirit of God. That is the revelation; that is our foundation. What reasonably can we conclude, except that the blood of Christ is the Spirit?

When the Spirit sanctifies us, we have been sanctified by the blood because the holy Spirit is the blood of Christ. When the Spirit washes our sins away, the blood has washed our sins away. When the Spirit justifies us before God, the blood has justified us before God. The division that men have invented with their own reasoning apart from the revelation of God, is an invented one. The division that has developed between receiving the holy Ghost and the blood washing away sins is one that men have imagined; it is unscriptural; it is baseless; it is just the result of the thoughts of men and is apart from the revelation of God.

You cannot have your sins washed away before you receive the holy Ghost baptism because the holy Ghost is what washes it away; it is the true blood that you must drink. We're told that the resurrection from the dead is accomplished by the power of God's Spirit – that's in Romans 8. So it is by the Spirit dwelling in us that we are going to be raised from the dead. But in Hebrews 13:20, the resurrection is said to be accomplished by the blood of the everlasting covenant; now, which one is it? Will we take one and leave the other off? Or can we reasonably conclude that when the apostles mention the blood of Christ, they're referring to the Spirit of God?

They are the same thing. When the Bible speaks of the blood of Christ it is speaking of the holy Ghost because Jesus referred to it in that way. "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life." When Paul talks of the communion – the true communion of God that's in the Spirit, that's in the blood of Christ and in the body of Christ, the breaking of the body of Christ to one another – he says, "I speak as unto wise men; judge you what I say."

In Revelation 7:4, we're told that the saints of God washed their robes white in the blood of the lamb. Now you tell me, if the blood of Christ was the natural fluid that came out of Jesus' body when he was whipped and crucified, and you took that fluid and washed your clothes in it, what color would your clothes come out to be? Your own common sense and reason that you have from God tells you – you know – that if you took that natural blood that flowed out of Jesus' body, your clothes would be washed red. But in Revelation 7 it says that the saints washed their robes white in the blood of the lamb.

It's the blood of the lamb that cleanses you from every sin. The blood of Christ makes our spiritual robes white. "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Here's another example from Ephesians 2:13: Paul wrote that we are brought near to God by the blood of the lamb. The blood of the lamb is what gets us close to God. Five verses later, in 2:18, Paul said, "We have access to the Father by the Spirit." Which way is it? Or is it

either-or? Sometimes the blood gets you to God, sometimes the Spirit? You know that's not true.

The Spirit is the blood that washes away sin and gives life to the body of Christ. 1Peter 1:18 speaks of "incorruptible blood". Incorruptible means eternal; deathless; it's not natural; it's immortal. The blood of Christ is incorruptible. It is what redeems us to God. It is the Spirit – we are redeemed when we receive the Spirit; the true blood of Christ. You cannot separate the blood of Christ from the holy Ghost because they are the same thing.

You cannot reasonably conclude, based upon the revelation of God, that your sins are washed away and then later you get an extra blessing of the baptism of the holy Ghost. That is unreasonable and unrighteous. Your sins are not washed away by the blood of Christ before you receive the holy Ghost. Your sins, as were Paul's, are washed away when you receive the holy Ghost, because the Spirit is the life-giving blood of Christ.

## **The Spirit of Antichrist**

We've all heard about the antichrist but usually when he's spoken of in spite of the biblical evidence he is spoken of as one who is coming in the future when actually he has been here nearly two thousand years. The antichrist arrived shortly after Christ did. In this last segment of our series on the New Birth we will expose that crafty antichrist for what he really is, a lying spirit whose chief work from the beginning has been to confuse people concerning the New Birth.

His chief work from the beginning has been to persuade people to believe they are Born Again before they are. His chief goal has been to teach people to confess that they are Born Again before they receive the baptism of the holy Ghost hoping that when they do hear about the spirit baptism they will feel no need for it and will turn away in a show of ungodly confidence. This is the real antichrist and oh how successful he has been.

I understand that it may seem strange to some of you that we should conclude a series on the new birth by studying the antichrist, actually though it is perfectly fitting. If there is any issue which Satan desires men to be confused about it is the issue of the new birth. That is the purpose and the plan of his antichrist spirit that is already at work and has been at work since almost the beginning of the new covenant.

The antichrist is not some future monster for which we are to look. He is, as both John the apostle and Paul said, a spiritual presence that has already come and had already come in their day. In John's first epistle chapter 2 verse 18 he wrote, "children it is the last hour and just as you heard that antichrist is coming even now many antichrists have appeared." This is almost two thousand years ago and John says, even now, there are many antichrists.

Now we need to consider what the apostles wrote because they knew the truth. In the next verse, in verse 19, he said, "they, (now this is the antichrists that have gone out into the world), they went out from us." So they had been walking in the apostles doctrine and spirit at some point

"they went out from us", but John says they were not of us or they were not from us we did not send them out for if they were from us they would have remained among us but they went out from us so that they might be exposed because not all are from us.

We read in Acts 15 that some men went out from Jerusalem away from John away from Peter away from James teaching things that were not true to the Gentiles. Such were the antichrists, they went out from us. The antichrists are those among the true Saints of God who are very religious they are not anti-religion they are not anti-Jesus. They are anti what Christ really is. In the first century AD the word anti did not mean against, it meant instead of. It's used in the New Testament for one example where Jesus said if any of you who is a father has a son and that son asks you for a fish will that father, will you anti a fish give him a stone. It means "instead of."

The spirit of antichrist is a spirit of instead of Christ. It's a spirit instead of what is really the spirit of Christ it is a very religious spirit but it's a spirit of a religion that is instead of the true one. It offers a forgiveness that is not really forgiveness. It offers a love that is instead of the love of God, it offers a fellowship that is instead of the fellowship of Christ, it offers doctrines that are instead of the doctrine of God. Paul warned his fellow believers of those who would come teaching another Jesus or offer them another spirit. The antichrist offers you another Jesus. The spirit of antichrist is very religious as I said, it teaches in the name of God things that are not right. It offers another Jesus who has no power, it offers another spirit that does not confess Christ when it enters in. This is what anti really meant when John wrote it.

Now the first point then that we really need to understand in order to comprehend the mystery of iniquity as Paul described it concerning the antichrist the man of sin is that the antichrist has already come and has been here since almost the beginning of the New Testament. There are now, remember John said, many antichrists and they went out from us and they existed in his day, this is two thousand years ago, they were already here. They were people who walked with Christ and then walked away, who walked with the apostles and then began to teach perverse things. They departed from the faith that had been revealed to the Saints and began to teach a doctrine which even now still has wide acceptance among believers.

This is the spirit of antichrist. We do not want to be among those who hold simplistic notions about the antichrist. The antichrist spirit is a deeply religious spirit, it is here and it has been here a long time. That's the first thing we want to know. Paul never mentions the word antichrist. He calls this spirit by a different name, he calls it the man of sin or the son of perdition. Perdition means destruction or damnation and this spirit is the son of it. In other words it has the nature of it. It produces death and damnation where it is received. When this man of sin, this son of perdition, this spirit of antichrist enters in when it's welcomed it brings desolation.

Jesus called it the abomination of desolation. God hates it and if you embrace it, it makes you desolate of the things of God. Jesus said it was an abomination but he also said what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination with God and the religion of the man of sin the religion of the spirit of antichrist is very highly esteemed on this earth, it looks good it says it's good people think it's good but it's without the holiness and power of the spirit of God.

In 2Thessalonians chapter 2 Paul writes about this spirit in this way, he said “now I beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto him that you not be soon shaken in mind or alarmed by a spirit or by a spoken word or by a letter seeming to be from us saying that the day of Christ is at hand”. Somebody was writing these Saints in Thessalonica saying that the day of Christ was at hand.

Jesus said one of the signs that his time is not near is that men would rise up in his name and say that it is. Have you ever heard that Jesus could come back at any moment all things are fulfilled Jesus said they would be here and they would say the time is at hand and they did do that and they are here now, many of them, don't be fooled into thinking that Jesus is about to come at any moment. It's not time for him to come. I've been telling this to people for many years now. It's doubtful that Jesus will come in my lifetime or yours if you're listening to me in the same year that I am broadcasting this. Many things must happen before Jesus comes again but the false teachers try to manipulate people through fear to give them more money, to do as they say, to carry out the ceremonies, to believe the doctrines.

The spirit of antichrist is in control of all of it to keep God's people under control. Paul was writing these Thessalonians and saying to be careful do not fall into that trap. Then Paul goes on to say this “let no man deceive you by any means because that day (and he's talking about the coming of Jesus) shall not come unless there comes first a falling away and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”. Now notice that Paul does not prophesy to the Saints here that the man of sin is coming sometime in the future. What he is saying what he is prophesying is that he would be revealed, he would be exposed, he would be brought out of the darkness and exposed for what he really is. He was already there. In the first part of verse 7 in this same chapter Paul says the mystery of iniquity is already at work.

The man of sin was already there in Paul's day, the antichrist was already there in John's day. They weren't saying to look in the future for a monstrous man to come, who is “the antichrist”; neither one of them said that. They said it is already going on, but before Jesus comes back it's going to be exposed. So, this man of sin is already at work just as John said, “*There are many antichrists and they went out from us.*” Paul is describing that same spirit, those same people, directed by that same man of sin, Lucifer himself, but that man of sin has been revealed to some of God's people; He's been revealed to us. God is beginning to set His people free.

We all know that in John's revelation, the Book of Revelation, a Beast is mentioned. This is a great world ruler who will have a helper called the False Prophet. And they will subjugate the entire Earth, and persecute and put to death any who do not worship the Beast. But that is not the antichrist. That Beast is coming, but the antichrist is already here. He's been here almost from the inception of the New Testament. The mystery of iniquity doth already work. Even now there be many antichrist.

There is a reason that the word “antichrist” is not in the Book of Revelation. Think about that. When you use the word “antichrist”, you are talking about a being who has been here since the earliest days of the New Testament, and has worked and is virtually in control of the minds of God's people. Today. But he is going to be revealed for what he really is. And the Spirit of God, the holy Ghost, is doing that now in the hearts of many who believe the truth when they

hear it. The antichrist is already at work, and he's in full command of that institution that is called "the Church".

And he's already seated in the temple of God, because Paul says, he prophesies about this and describes it: 2 Thessalonians chapter 4...chapter 2, verse 4, he said that this antichrist "*sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.*" Now don't think in carnal terms; to be carnally minded is death. But to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Paul said that the antichrist "*sits in the temple of God*". What did Paul say *is* the temple of God? He wrote to the Corinthian saints and said, "*Don't you know that you are the temple of God? The holy Ghost dwells in you.*" (1 Corinthians 3:16) That is the only temple of God on the planet. Paul asked the saints to think about that and to think that way. So when Paul said that the antichrist is sitting in the temple of God, he's not describing a building in Jerusalem.

Many religious teachers, biblical teachers, carnally minded, read that verse in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 4, about the man of sin sitting in the temple of God. And they teach that this antichrist is a bad man coming in the future who's going to build a building in Jerusalem and sit in it. Well look, Paul was not foolish. Paul used words the way God uses words. When Paul said, "*This man of sin is sitting in the temple of God*", he knew what the temple of God is. He didn't teach that a temple would be rebuilt in Jerusalem.

Even if men did build a temple in Jerusalem, it wouldn't be the temple of God. They might call it that, but that won't make it true. What Paul said was true. The antichrist is sitting in God's temple. And you are the temple of the living God, because the holy Ghost is dwelling in you. That is where the antichrist is reigning, in the temple of God, in the hearts of people who have the real Spirit of God. They are the only temple of God that exists on the planet, those in whom the Spirit of God is. That is where the throne of antichrist is; he's sitting there as God, claiming to be God himself. And God's people have received him that way because they've been misled by Christian doctrine. That's how you receive the spirit of antichrist, through his doctrines.

Even ancient philosophers, Socrates and Plato, knew and said that whatever deceives, bewitches. Paul mentioned this same thing, implied the same thing in his letter to the Galatians when he asked them who had bewitched them that they should no longer believe the truth. You see, the spirit of antichrist had made it, and his ministers had made it to the Galatians and perverted the faith of the saints there. It was already working in Paul's day.

When you receive a lie into your heart, you receive a spirit with it. You become somewhat bewitched; a spell is cast over your spirit. And Paul saw this working among God's people in his day, John saw it working in his day, he said, "*You've heard that it was coming, and here it is.*" But God is going to reveal the spirit of antichrist to be exactly what it is in His sight. Are you ready to have that man of sin revealed...as a part of preparing for the coming of the Lord?

The antichrist doctrine is that he is not here yet. He is here telling you that he's coming. We see him, we know he is already here. We see him as taking over many of the hearts and minds of the people looking for God. And in the main, God's people have received him as if he was the Lord himself, and made room for him in their hearts. Paul said to the Thessalonians, in that same chapter 2, 2 Thessalonians 2:5-6; He said, "*Don't you remember that when I was still with you I*

*told you about this? And now you know what is restraining, what is holding things back so that he might be revealed in his time*", not come, he was already there, but be revealed in his time.

It must be time for God to begin to reveal the antichrist for what he really is. To reveal the doctrines that he teaches. To reveal the fact that he's been here the whole time. To reveal the fact that he teaches, the spirit of antichrist teaches that he's not here yet. God is setting some of His people free. Don't you want to be among them? God is visiting people who are in bondage to Christianity to set them free and open their eyes and let them see that spirit of antichrist that sits in their temple telling them this is God.

God is hearing the cry of His abused people, and He hurts for them. Now, the key verses in the Bible that help us best understand what is the spirit of antichrist are in 1 John, chapter 4. Beginning in verse one, John the apostle addresses the people that he loves so much to help them see clearly in their day, the spirit of antichrist and the real Spirit of God. In 1 John, chapter 4, verse one, this is the only place in the Bible where we are told, this is how you know the Spirit of God. The reason John felt the need to write to these people to tell them what the real Spirit of God was, is that the spirit of antichrist was already at work in their midst.

He wrote to them and said, "*Cherished people of God, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets have gone out from us into the world.*" Notice this. John did not say, many false prophets have come *into* the congregation of the Lord from the world, he said they went *out* into the world; and he'd already told them he went out "from us". There's not but one place from which you can go out into the world and that is out of the kingdom of God. "*Many false prophets,*" John said, "*have gone out from us into the world.*" And then in verse two is one of the most important verse in the entire Bible, because he starts it out by saying, "By this, you know the Spirit of God. Now isn't that important? Don't you want to know what is really the Spirit of God, and what is not?"

Our ears ought to prick up when we hear that. There was something that these antichrists were preaching and today are preaching, that was confusing the issue as to what is the real spirit of God. And so John felt moved by the love of God for God's people to speak very plainly what is the spirit of God and what is not. And if the people needed that knowledge in John's day, when the spirit of antichrist was just beginning to show its ugly head, how much more now when it has taken control of the religious apparatus that God's people look to for guidance. It's called Christianity, and the spirit of antichrist is the lord of it.

Today when the spirit of antichrist has not only come and worked, but has taken over, we need to be delivered from its influence. Now listen, hereby you know the spirit of God, this is it, every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. Please pay attention to what John does not say. He does not say, every person who confesses that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is of God. John knew better than that. He knew there were men out there saying Jesus came from God, he called them false teachers. Paul knew better than that, Peter knew better than that, all of them mentioned men out there ministering in the name of Jesus who were liars, who were deceived. Jesus said they were coming. John would never had said every person who tells you or confesses that Jesus came in the flesh is of God, but what he did say is that, every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, because he knew that every time

somebody received the real spirit of God that spirit testified, it spoke in tongues, it confessed that Christ had come in the flesh.

Paul said the Spirit bares witness with our spirit. John said in 1st John the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is truth. The Old Testament prophets, the New Testament men of God, all spoke of the Spirit, speaking of the testimony of the Spirit. Isaiah said in Isaiah 28:11-12, "With stammering lips and another tongue will God speak to this people. To whom he said, this is the rest, this is the real spirit of God, wherewith you may cause the weary to rest; and this, real spirit of God, is the refreshing."

Zephaniah 3:9 prophesies about it. Amos, Paul describes it. Peter calls it the answer of a clear conscience towards God, it's vocal. Jesus said when the Spirit has come he will testify of me and John said this is how you know the real spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God.

Paul spoke of men who had transformed themselves into apostles of Christ, but were liars. They claimed to be apostles of Jesus Christ, they were not anti-Jesus. They were offering men an instead of Christ spirit an antichrist spirit. They were working in fact for Satan, Paul said, who himself had been transformed into an angel of light, that is claiming to preach the gospel. Look, claiming to preach the gospel is one of the marks of the spirit of antichrist. Antichrist does not speak evil of Jesus, he offers doctrines and a spirit that is instead of Christ. He teaches falsely about the spirit of God. John spoke truly about the spirit of God. John said every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. What do we say?

John warned his precious brother and sisters about being deceived by a spirit that did not speak when it came in. He warned them about the false teachers, the antichrist, Paul warned them, warned the saints about false apostles, Jesus warned us.

In Matthew 24 Jesus is talking about the end of the world and his disciples asked him what are the signs of these things that the end of the world is coming and what is the sign of your coming? And the first thing Jesus answers them is, "Take heed that no man deceive you for many shall come in my name", speaking well of Jesus, but not motivated by the spirit of Christ, not the real Spirit of God that testifies when it comes in, that confesses that Christ has come in to your flesh when it comes in.

Jesus said they would be saying, I'm anointed, I am Christ, I am Christ means I am anointed. When they come speaking well of Jesus saying they are ordained to speak things from God, that spirit that they claim is God's doesn't speak when it comes in. Every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. And when you receive the real Spirit of Christ, it confesses, it speaks, it testifies as Jesus said, or as Paul said it bears witness in Romans 8. When you receive the holy Ghost, the real holy Ghost, it speaks through you. It's like the wind that blows through you Jesus told Nicodemus and you hear the sound of it. That is the real Spirit of God. The spirit of antichrist is the spirit of Christianity; it is the spirit that men have to tell you that you have received, because it doesn't confess Christ when it comes in. When you receive the real holy Ghost, it will confess Jesus Christ has come into your body, your flesh. It will confess Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Jesus said it this way in John 15:26 & 27; "But when

the comforter has come who I will send unto you, he will testify of me and you also shall bear witness.”

Do you have the spirit of God that testifies and confesses Jesus Christ or do you have the spirit of antichrist that some Christian minister told you that you had, that you just have to assume and take his word for it that it has come in? If you have that kind of spirit that did not speak in a heavenly language or as Isaiah said, “In stammering lips and another tongue”, when it came to you, you have what John describes in 1 John 4:3 he said, “Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not of God”, and this, this spirit that many are receiving and being told is the Spirit of God but it says nothing when it comes in, this is the spirit of the antichrist that you heard was coming and now already is it in the world.

Which spirit do you say is of God; the one that speaks when it comes in and confesses Jesus Christ or the one that does not? Any non-speaking spirit that the devil can get you to recognize as being of God is only a spirit of that man of sin, the antichrist. He sits in the temple of God because he has persuaded God’s people to receive him. Most of God’s people on the earth today were persuaded to believe they had the Spirit of God before they were baptized with the holy Ghost and begin to speak with other tongues. That’s the spirit of antichrist, when they receive the real holy Ghost, when their hunger and thirst for righteousness pushed them on and motivated them on to receive the real thing, then they became the temple of God, but they didn’t get rid of that non-speaking spirit, they still had confidence in him, they still believe that they were born again before they were baptized with the holy Ghost. That is when the spirit of antichrist is in the temple of God.

Every spirit baptized person on earth has spoken in tongues or with stammering lips when it happened and most of them have been taught that they were born again before that time. That is the doctrine of the spirit of antichrist. Many of them claimed that they are already saved and were already saved before they received the baptism of the holy Ghost, that’s the doctrine of the antichrist, that’s him in them, motivating them to stand up for him. You didn’t have forgiveness of sins until the holy Ghost came in and it spoke. You didn’t have your sins washed away anymore then the apostle Paul did before he received the holy Ghost.

Until you receive the baptism of Christ, your sins were not gone. You didn’t have God in your heart until the holy Ghost came in. You didn’t have Jesus in your heart. When the Spirit, the real Spirit of God, comes in, Jesus said, “the Father and I come take our abode”. You see, He comes. 1John 3:24: “We know that He dwells in us by the Spirit that He has given to us.” How’d John know that? Because the Spirit confessed Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

Yes, the spirit of antichrist has been enthroned for almost two thousand years among the saints of God on earth. He’s been, for many many centuries now, in the temple of God claiming that he is God, and that receiving him is greater than receiving the holy Ghost from God. He claims that he washed your sins away before the holy Ghost got there. He claims that he cleansed your soul, he forgave your sins, before the holy Ghost got there. And he’s a liar.

Yes, it’s the spirit of antichrist who teaches men to believe that they are saved before they receive the holy Ghost baptism. And he has the hearts of my brothers and sisters, and I want



them free from him so that we can all be together in one. The doctrine of the antichrist, the basis of all of this religion that God hates, called Christianity, is that you are right with God before the Son of God baptizes you with His Spirit.

You never see, you never read in any book of the New Testament of any person being born again before he received the holy Ghost baptism; there's no example of that in the Bible. The spirit of antichrist, in spite of that truth, has just about convinced everybody in the kingdom of God that when they received him and his speechless spirit, that's when God came in.

And now you know why the word "antichrist" never appears in the book of Revelation. John's revelation dealt with the future, but when John wrote that revelation he was dealing with the spirit of antichrist among God's people right then, and warning them of his speechless spirit. The antichrist came teaching that men were right with God and had their sins washed away by the blood of Christ without receiving the holy Ghost baptism with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. That's the doctrine of the antichrist, and what a success that doctrine has been.

It has ruined the beautiful garments of the children of God. It has divided us. It has darkened the minds of God's people, and turned them against one another. But Jesus will rescue us if we'll ask him. He is now exposing that man of sin to you, so that all of us – all of his children – may pursue the things of the Spirit of God together.

This is how you know the real Spirit of God – the most important words that I've read to you tonight – John said it, and he knew what he was saying: "This is how you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is that spirit of antichrist whereof you have heard is coming; and it's already here." Paul said when God exposed him – when God revealed him to His people – that would be a sign that the coming of Jesus is near. And let's hope that's what is happening now.

## **What Must I Do to be Born Again?**

Over the years, many people have asked me, "What must I do to be born again?" That is the question isn't it? When John the Baptist came preaching, he told the people, "Repent, and do works meet for repentance." When Jesus came preaching, he said the same thing: "Repent, believe the Gospel, do works that are fit (or fitting) to repentance." Many decades later, the apostle Paul preached that men should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance.

That's the simple answer to the question "What must I do to do be born again?" "What must I do to receive the baptism of the holy Ghost?" When John was asked for details by some people, "What do you mean 'repent'?", he explained to them in Luke chapter 3: "If you have two coats and someone has none, give him one." He told the soldiers, "Do no one any harm, and don't complain about your wages."

There's an attitude of humility that comes with repentance that causes you to do deeds that are different from the ordinary people around you; the ones who have not sought God, and have not

repented. What must you do to receive the baptism of the Spirit? In John's letter called "first John", he wrote that, "Everyone who does righteousness is born of God." So we know that we must do righteousness.

We must confess our sins and forsake them. Solomon said, "He who confesses sin and forsakes it shall receive mercy." We know when we read about John the Baptist preaching that people came to the Jordan River confessing their sins so that they could receive mercy. They had confessed their sins and abandoned them. They weren't confessing the sins they were still committing, because they had ceased from committing sin; because that's repentance. Repentance is ceasing from sin and replacing those sinful deeds with righteousness.

1John 2:29: "If we know that He is righteous then we know that everyone who does righteousness is born of Him." There's something else John tells us that must happen to be born of God: In chapter 5 of his first letter, in verse one, he said, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

So we know we must believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. And we must repent. And we must do righteousness. In chapter 4, 1John 4:7, John suggests that we must love God's people. He said in 4:7, "Cherished people, let us love one another because love is from God and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God."

This is the simple answer to the question, "How or what must I do to be born again?" "What must I do to receive the baptism of the Spirit?" "What must I do to have my sins washed away?" We repent; we do works meet for repentance; we do righteousness; we believe in Jesus. That's the answer. And my prayer is, that through this series on the New Birth, you've been encouraged, not only to know what it is, but to seek it, to have it, and if you already have received it, to value it as you never have before. May God bless you with the richness of His Spirit and keep you in His love unto the end. And may we all meet one day in that land He's prepared for those who love Him.