

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD #3

The New Birth

Review

We are continuing our studies on “The Power of God’s Word” and what the power of God’s Word will do for us.

Last time we learned that the Word of God has the power to put faith in our hearts:

**Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.
Romans 10:17**

The Word of God is the only agent in the universe that gives us faith to be saved, to be healed, to be delivered and to prosper; and faith comes to us when we hear the Word of God activated by the Holy Spirit.

But today I want to show how we are “born again” by the power of God’s word and take a fresh look at the biblical doctrine of *regeneration*.

I. The Biblical Doctrine of Regeneration

A. We Must be Born Again

1. In the Gospel of John, chapter 3, Jesus is engaged in a not so seeker-friendly conversation with a Pharisee named Nicodemus.

a. He wants to talk about the miracles of Jesus but the Lord suddenly switches the subject:

John 3:3, 7

Jesus answered and said unto him, “Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God. “You must be born again”.

2. Nicodemus is confused; he thinks “born again” means reentering his mother’s womb and coming through the birth canal a second time; and Jesus seems frustrated with him...

Are you the Teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?

John 3:9

3. When I first read this story many years ago, it seemed Jesus was being unfair to Nicodemus; He seems to be scolding him for not knowing about the new birth when there is nothing anywhere in the Old Testament about being “born again” or the need of a “new birth”.

4. Today we have a different problem; we are very familiar with terms like “born again” and the “new birth”; but in my experience, many Christians are as clueless as Nicodemus when it comes to what it really means to be “born again”.

5. For example, many Christians limit the meaning of being born again to the condition for going to heaven.

“You cannot go to heaven unless you are born again.”

6. Well, that is true. But Jesus is actually saying much more than that! The key to the conversation is in vv.5-6.

John 3:5-7 NASB

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

7. Most Christians read up to v.3 where Jesus says we can't go to heaven unless we are born again; but many Christians have never gone on to these verses where **Jesus tells us that we must have a new birth because there was a fatal flaw with our old birth; we must have a second birth after the Spirit to because our first birth was after the flesh!**

8. We must have re-generation because there was a problem with our old generation. The human race has a *generational* problem; what theologians have called...

B. The Human Predicament

Predicament

An unpleasantly difficult, perplexing, or dangerous situation.

Dictionary.com

Here is the biblical analysis of what's wrong with the race:

1. God has designed the world so that all life comes from a seed.

a. God created all living things with a seed within itself to reproduce after its kind.

b. This is true of plants, animals, and human beings.

c. If it is alive it is born from a seed.

2. The law of the seed is that the nature of the seed determines the nature of the life that comes out of it.

a. All living things reproduce "after its kind".

3. When Adam sinned, he corrupted his seed; this is why all who are born of Adam, including us, are "subject to decay"; this is why we die.

4. The sinful nature of our first father was transmitted to us by his seed in our birth. Here is how the Bible describes sons of Adam:

Psalm 14:1-3 NKJV

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, there is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one.

a. The Apostle Paul quotes this passage in his letter to the church at Rome in proving man's hopeless condition apart from God.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 NKJV

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?

b. The problem is not just in what we think and what we do and how we feel; we have a "heart problem"; there is something wrong in us from birth; it is something in our very nature.

Isaiah 1:4-6 NKJV

Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment.

5. But the Prophet Jeremiah points out our biggest problem; we are what we are by nature and we do not have the power within ourselves to change it!

Jeremiah 13:23 NKJV

**Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?
Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.**

Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Can a leopard take away its spots? Neither can you start doing good, for you have always done evil. (NLT)

a. God says we are no more able to consistently turn away from evil than a man can change the color of his skin or a leopard change its spots.

b. We are what we are by because of the nature of the seed that begat us.

6. We cannot fix the problem because we *are* the problem!

a. We have no power over the problem because the problem is born in us; it is in our very nature!

b. We can change our diet, change our schedule, change our minds; but we have no power to change our *nature*.

c. Many people think they can change their lives anytime they want to by means of “will power”; they fancy themselves free to be whoever they want to be. But it never lasts because our will is in bondage to our nature.

Charles Spurgeon

“Till the will is changed, till what is called ‘free will’ is made free from the chains of evil and the love of sin, man cannot rise to happiness and God any more that the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard change his spots.”

7. The only way an Ethiopian can change his skin is if he is no longer an Ethiopian. The only way a leopard can change his spots is if he can somehow become something other than a leopard. The only way a sinner can escape a life of sin is that he become something other than a sinner!

8. Jesus said it this way...

II. You Must Be Born Again

A. A New Birth Requires a New Seed

1. In nature and in the Bible there is something called the law of the seed: the nature of the seed determines the nature of the life that comes out of it.

2. In the Creation story, we see this repeated 6 times: everything living thing God created has a seed “within itself”. Everything is reproduced through a seed; and that seed reproduces after its own kind.

3. We are all born into this world from the “seed” of our earthly father; and we derived our life and our nature from the previous generation; the only real change can come from “re-generation”; that which was born of the flesh must be re-born of the Spirit.

4. But how can it happen? (Finally, here comes the message...)

B. We Are Born Again by the Power of God’s Word

1. The Apostle Peter writes this to the church in his 1st epistle:

1 Peter 1:22-23 NKJV

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

2. The nature of life is determined by the seed; our first birth came out of “corruptible seed”; “corrupt” means “subject to decay”; but we are born again of the Word of God, which is “incorruptible seed”!

a. The New American Standard translation says...

1 Peter 1:23 NASB

For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

b. The Message Bible is even more dramatic:

1 Peter 1:23-24 MESSAGE

Your new life is not like your old life. Your old birth came from mortal sperm; your new birth comes from God's living Word. Just think: a life conceived by God himself!

3. This is precisely why the Virgin Birth is not just a nice idea; it was a necessity!

a. The “seed” of Adam was corrupted by sin; like kind produces like kind; it would have been impossible for the Son of God to be born of the seed of Adam!

b. The 1st prophecy of the coming of Christ was in Genesis 3, in what God spoke to the serpent:

Gen 3:15 NKJV

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

c. God refers to His Son as “the seed of the woman”; but in natural generation, the woman has no seed. The male carries the seed!

d. But Adam’s seed became corrupted when he sinned; so the Son of God could be born of an earthly mother but not of an earthly father!

e. So the woman would be the Virgin Mary; but the seed would come from God Himself; His living Word, the Son of God Himself!

4. It was the power of God’s word that put Jesus into the womb of Mary; it is the power of God’s word that puts Jesus into us! We are born again of the same seed; the Word of God.

James 1:21 NKJV

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

“...the engrafted Word” KJV

“...the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.” NLT

5. Every seed has the power of reproduction within itself. So it is with the seed of the Word of God.

The seeds in a package of seeds don't look like the picture on the package! How can that come from this?

Derek Prince

“That’s the miracle of seed-a pattern for what happens to us; we receive the little black seed-but if we receive it it will bring forth the fullness of what’s in it-the life and nature of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the word!”

GOD’S PURPOSE IS TO REPLICATE JESUS!

James 1:18

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

“firstfruits”

The agricultural products harvested first and given to God as an offering; also the first of more products to come,
The Apologetics Study Bible

Matthew Henry

“By our first birth we are corrupt, shaped in sin and iniquity; we must therefore undergo a second birth; our souls must be fashioned and enlivened anew. We must be born from above; born to a divine and heavenly life, a life of communion with God and the upper world, and, in order to this, it is to partake of the divine nature and bear the image of the heavenly.”

III. Conclusion

A. Review

1. The human race is hopelessly lost in sin because it is born from a corruptible seed.

a. For those born once, born of the flesh, the problem is not “skin deep”; the problem is in the nature of how they were born.

2. Jesus supplies the only solution; “you must be born again”; and the only power that can bring about the new birth is the Word of God.

3. We are born again of incorruptible seed that can never die; but it also can never sin.

B. Something to Think About

1. Testimony: There is a verse in a passage in the 1st epistle of John that I’ve pondered for many years.

1 John 3:9 NKJV

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

2. I knew this could not be speaking of sinless perfection; we know from scripture itself and personal experience that born again people do sin!

3. For many years I taught the meaning of this verse this way:

a. The Greek verb for “commit” here is in a tense that refers to an ongoing action; John was not saying that those born again never sin; he meant that those who are born again do not live a lifestyle of sin, as in this translation:

No one born of God practices sin... (NASB)

4. I still believe that’s a good interpretation; it has helped me minister to many a church member who has fallen into serious sin on a “one-time basis”.

5. But I believe there’s another truth here I overlooked; there is a new nature in me, my born-again spirit, that truly does NOT commit sin.

a. I can sin with my mind when it is not renewed by the Word of God.

b. I can sin with my soul when I know what’s wrong and do it anyway.

c. I can sin with my body when I overeat or throw a golf club in anger.

6. Of course I don't practice sin as a lifestyle or I could not in good conscience stand hear and preach to you.

7. But lately I've been wondering if this word is not literally true; if the power of God's word has implanted the very nature and holiness of Christ into my born again spirit, then surely that nature truly does not commit sin.

8. It's just a thought; but I like it. And it helps me know how much I need the the Word of God, which is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword; helping me understand the Christ in me is the true me and the sins I occasionally commit cannot corrupt that new nature within.

Altar Call and Prayer

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