

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW BIRTH

By Keith Greer

No Bible subject has been more misunderstood than the "new birth". The phrase "born again", which is a Bible concept, has been twisted and perverted to the point many brethren shy away from using it. Let us allow the Scriptures to explain this great truth.

"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" {John 3:5} How is one born of the "water and spirit"?

The work of the Spirit brought us the word, which one must obey to be "born again". "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, "{1 Peter 1:23} Remember, seed produces "after its own kind."

What takes away man's sins? The blood of Christ of course. Revelation 1:5; Ephesians 1:7. How does one contact that blood?

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. "{Romans 6:3,4} Dead to sin, buried in water, arises to walk in newness of life.

Something else takes place when one submits to being "born again." Three changes take place in one's life.

CONDITION. A person goes from being lost to a saved condition. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, " {Romans 3: 23} What happens when I sin? "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord "{Romans 6:23}

The new birth changes this condition. "Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. " {2 Timothy 2:10}

RELATIONSHIP. When one is "born again" they enjoy a new relationship. From one who was an alien to a child of God.

"And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled" {Colossians 1:20,21} Now one is in the family of God and He is their Father.

STATE. One goes from a dead state to a living one, spiritually speaking. "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. "{Ephesians 5:1,2}

"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" {Romans 6: 11}

Outside of Christ one is walking in "death" – separated from God by their sins. Obedience to God's plan gives one "life".

Do you understand why the term being "born again" is an important one? The new birth changes our condition, relationship and state. Can the physical birth accomplish these three things? Being born physically does not place one in the family of God. It does not change their condition for they are without sin. Since they are without sin they are alive and not dead. Isn't the "new birth" a wonderful thing? Thanks be to God that He loved us enough to allow us to be adopted into His family and receive an eternal inheritance. ***