

A STUDY OF THE NEW BIRTH (2)

BY KEITH GREER

In 1 Corinthians 2:7-13, the apostle Paul gave the church at Corinth another passage regarding the Spirit's work. This passage is important because it tells us that the Spirit revealed God's mind and that the medium He used to reveal that information is God's word. Thus, we conclude that the Spirit's part of the new birth is the revelation of the process and we see why those outside of Christ need to undergo it. Now let's consider the second element...

Water. One cannot reject the Spirit's role in the new birth because God made it an essential part of the process. Most religious people have no problem accepting the Spirit's role—even expanding it beyond the parameters revealed in God's word. But, for the same reason, the second element is equally important if one is to develop a correct understanding of this spiritual birth. Remember, Jesus said, **“Except man is born of water and Spirit.”** If, and only if, these two elements are part of the process can it rightly be considered being born again. This is an eternal truth. Without both elements, one cannot enter God's kingdom. Don't forget this point. Both elements—**water and spirit**—are essential. The Spirit revealed both.

What role does water play in the process? Listen to God's word:

“That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” {Ephesians 5:26, 27}

“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}

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” {Colossians 2:11-13}

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” {Hebrews 10:22}

From these passages, and others, we learn what God’s word teaches—that the water in the process is baptism. **Every** conversion in the book of Acts ends with the obedient believer submitting to water baptism—see for yourself. Is this by accident or by design? What makes this part so necessary? God said so. According to the Spirit-revealed word, the sinner contacts Christ’s blood in the baptismal water—thus making remission and forgiveness possible.

If a person respects God and His word, he will not reject any of His conditions. We must be careful not to place too much emphasis on the **WATER** at the expense of the **SPIRIT** part of this process. God’s word says it takes both parts to constitute the new birth. One either believes in or rejects the new birth. Regardless of what you choose, the truth remains! ***