

THE THREE-PART FORMULA FOR SALVATION

All your life, you have heard a message about the person of Jesus Christ, but you are NOT told about the MESSAGE He BROUGHT to this earth! The very first words he spoke were, "REPENT ye, and believe the gospel!" But what does it mean to repent? And what about all the preachers who say you need only BELIEVE on Jesus to be saved? Here is the little-understood three-part formula for salvation.

by Garner Ted Armstrong

"Come to the cross!" says the evangelist. "Just BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved," says another. "Receive Christ!" says yet another preacher. All your life you have heard it. Believe, believe, believe! Is BELIEF all there is to salvation?

The devil believes on the Lord Jesus Christ! Is HE saved? James wrote, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:19, 20).

Is simple "belief" enough? Obviously not, for the devil himself BELIEVES! He is a BELIEVER! And why should he not believe? After all, he was there in person, inside of Judas Iscariot at the crucifixion of Christ! His demons would saucily say, "I know who you are, you Jesus of Nazareth!" Demons RECOGNIZE Christ. They know He is the Son of God! They believe! Why do the preachers never tell you there is much more to salvation than mere "belief"?

WHY did Jesus Christ say, "REPENT YE, and believe the gospel"? What does it mean to "repent"? Repent of what?

To repent means to be deeply contrite; to be sorrowful, remorseful! The dictionary says, "Repent: To feel sorry for sin and seek forgiveness." Exactly!

When Peter had finished his inspired indictment of the crowd that had participated in the murder of Christ, they were stricken! Blood-guilty, frightened, they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Peter did not say "There is nothing you need DO — all you need is to `believe!'" Instead, Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" Acts 2:37, 38).

Here is a three-part blueprint for salvation! (1) Repent. (2) Be baptized. (3) You shall receive the Holy Spirit. This is DIFFERENT than the statements uttered by so many thousands of preachers and TV evangelists, isn't it?

Part One Of The Three-Part Formula

The FIRST requirement is to REPENT! Repent of what? Repent of SIN. And what IS sin? There is only one Bible definition of sin found from Genesis to Revelation. Read it, in your own Bible: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). God's Ten Command-ments, as magnified and lifted to a spiritual plane by Jesus Christ, comprise "the law." If we break one point, we are guilty of all (James 2:10).

God requires that we KEEP His law! There is much, much more to salvation than merely "believing" on the Lord Jesus Christ. We must OBEY Him, as well!

When a young nobleman came to Jesus, asking whether there was anything he needed to DO to receive salvation, notice Jesus' reply: "...if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17).

What a wonderful opportunity Jesus Christ had to give all the churches exactly what they needed to buttress their "no law, no works" doctrines! Had a group of modern preachers been standing there, they could have pled with Christ, begged him to say, "Why, young man, don't you know there is nothing you must DO to receive eternal life? Whoever has DECEIVED you into thinking there is something you need to DO? All you need is to BELIEVE on me! Believe that I am the Son of God. Believe that I am your Savior. Accept me. Receive me! Come to the cross!"

But alas! All the "grace only" and "no works" preachers were destined to be angered and frustrated by Jesus' words. Jesus Christ said the young man needed to KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS!

Notice what followed: "He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

"Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Matthew 19:18-22). Clearly, Jesus Christ pointed out many of the TEN COMMANDMENTS! He SUMMARIZED the last six commandments by saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

There are those who, in their self-righteous, adamant, anti-law posture "demand" that Jesus Christ repeat ALL TEN, exactly as written in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, in order for His statement to include the FOURTH command!

But He also omitted the first and the second! Does this mean Christ was placing His stamp of approval on IDOLATRY? God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and said, "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven images..."

God commanded, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." Did Jesus give permission for people to curse and swear, as so many do? He omitted the third commandment, after all.

Christ also omitted the fourth commandment. Sneering, rebellious law-breakers try to argue that, since He omitted the command to keep the Sabbath, we are not required to keep it, today!

All such hostile, anti-law arguments are rebellious, carnal, and vain. Those who attempt to twist Christ's meaning are in jeopardy of a very terrible fate unless they repent of their contempt toward God's law.

Jesus did not repeat the command against COVETING or bearing false witness either! Do the anti-law preachers say that it is perfectly alright to lie; to lust and covet? It is obvious to any honest person that Christ was referring to the Ten Commandments. It is equally obvious that he told the young man to KEEP them!

Jesus Christ Was The Lawgiver

These same anti-law preachers refuse to admit the plain scripture which proves that Jesus Christ was in fact the **GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT!** Notice it in your own Bible: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). Can you believe your own eyes, and your own Bible, or the myths and fables you have heard from childhood instead? Clearly, this passage says Jesus Christ of Nazareth, in His pre-human state with the Father, was the **CREATOR** who did the creating!

If you were with a neighbor, and he told you, "You see this house? See this barn, and the shed, and the corrals? I built all this. I did it myself." You might be amazed at the man's prowess, but would you call him a liar? Would you believe, instead, that the buildings had just spontaneously thrown themselves together?

John wrote, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him [He **CREATED** the earth and all life upon it!], and the world knew him not.

"He came unto his own [the Jewish race], and his own received him not.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

"Which were born [Greek: Gennao, meaning begotten], not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

"And the Word [Greek: Logos, or "Spokesman"] was made flesh, and dwelt [tabernacled] among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:10-14).

Therefore, the One we know as Jesus Christ is the Person of Divine Elohim who **WROTE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WITH HIS OWN FINGER!** He was the **LAWgiver** at Sinai!

Since sin is the breaking of the law, when one quits sinning, one begins to **KEEP** the law!

Suppose you had received several traffic violations, but had ignored them. Suppose you were stopped in your automobile, and the patrolman, radioing in your license number, found you were in violation of several laws. You are arrested, and taken before a judge.

You apologize with great sincerity and embarrassment, and explain that you had fallen on hard times; that you had no money to pay the fines, but offered to work to pay them off.

A kindly man in the courtroom stands up, and says, "Your Honor, I know this man — I know he is deeply sorry for having broken the law. I will pay his fines if you will permit." The judge is moved by your sincerity, and by the generous gesture of your benefactor.

The judge accepts the intercessory offer, and says "Case dismissed!" He looks at you with a smile, and says, "You are free to go."

What does his pardon mean? He has granted you grace, which means unmerited pardon and forgiveness! Are you now free to run stop lights, park in no parking zones, sideswipe parked cars, and try to run down pedestrians before they can make it to the sidewalk? As ridiculous as this may sound, it is EXACTLY what the "no law" preachers tell you! They are IGNORANT of the fact that God's GRACE is extended to us for the removal of sins that are PAST, but that His grace is NOT blanket permission to live in SIN!

When you are FORGIVEN OF SIN, does this mean you are now free to go out and BREAK THE LAW? Of course not! Then what should you do concerning the law you have previously broken, but are now forgiven? Why, you should begin to KEEP it, of course!

Paul asked, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace [the forgiveness of sin] may abound?"

"God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

"For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Romans 6:1-7). Metaphorically, God is telling us that, since the wages of sin (breaking the Ten Commandments) is DEATH, but that Christ has suffered death in our stead, we are reckoned as having PAID THE PENALTY! Now, so far as the law is concerned: "Case dismissed!" The law was broken. There was a DEATH sentence carried out — Christ's death, instead of our death! Now, the law is satisfied! Now, you are free to go. But free to go and do what? To BREAK the law which has cost the life of the Son of God so you can be FREE from its automatic penalty?

No more than you are free to run down pedestrians if you are allowed to go free by a kindly judge! No, you now must live WITHIN the law, and quit breaking it!

Part Two Of The Formula, "...and be baptized..."

Peter said the second requirement is "Be baptized!"

The Greek word baptizo means to be immersed. One does not stand a corpse up against a tree or telephone pole, and throw dirt in its face, or pour a handful of dirt over its head!

Instead, one BURIES a corpse. Notice that baptism signifies the BURIAL of the "old man," which had incurred the death penalty. As a symbol of accepting the intercessory sacrifice of Christ in your stead, you are "planted in the likeness of His death," by being momentarily submerged in water! Baptism is a rite. It is an outward symbol of your acknowledgment that you have earned the sentence of DEATH for all eternity, because you have sinned. It also symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Have YOU been baptized? Was it following deep repentance of having broken the Ten Commandments? Caution! Millions of people THINK they have "repented of sin," when, instead, they repented of certain prohibitions of their church! There is a difference! For instance. millions who observe the day of the SUN.

Sunday, instead of God's holy Sabbath day, are in complete ignorance that they are breaking the great TEST commandment of God's law! You need to read my booklet, *Why Keep Saturday For Sunday?* In it, you will find thorough scriptural proof about which day is the Christian Sabbath!

Many "repent" of drinking, honky-tonking, gambling, and carousing. They "repent" of strictures laid down by a particular church. But they do not know that they should repent of having lived contrary to the Ten Commandments of God, as Christ MAGNIFIED them in His Sermon on the Mount.

Remember, James says if we break one point, we are guilty of all! God does not categorize sin! Believe it or not, that means Sabbath-breaking is on a par with murder! The wages of sin is DEATH for breaking even one point of God's law! There are countless millions of church-going, professing "Christian" people who break God's Sabbath each and every week, yet believe they are innocent! Thousands work, earning their wages on God's Sabbath day, and assume they are innocent. But God says, "Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

"Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil" (Isaiah 56:1, 2).

By all means, if you have not yet read it, write or call for the booklet listed above.

Millions of people have been baptized — countless thousands of them by the biblically-prescribed method of immersion, and not by being "christened" as a baby, or "sprinkled" as in some churches. Because they have PROVED from the scriptures that the FORM of baptism they accepted is correct, they assume they are now dwelling in a condition called "grace."

But millions are deceived into believing that grace is a CONDITION IN WHICH THEY LIVE, not knowing that grace is a part of the character of God; that of granting undeserved PARDON FOR SIN!

Millions believe in the concept "once saved always saved," meaning that, once they "believe on Jesus" and are baptized by immersion, they cannot ever fall away; that "sin" now takes on a very unimportant, minor significance. They have quit card-playing, honky-tonking, gambling and carousing. They have sworn off liquor, beer, and wine. Now, they go to church every Sunday, and to Wednesday night Bible Studies. They send their children to "vacation Bible school."

Confident that they have "received Christ" they now live a life somewhat altered from before. BUT, they go to a church which believes in the immortality of the soul; an ever-burning hell in which "souls" are screaming, writhing, sobbing in unending agony; that God is a "trinity;" that SUNDAY is the day for Christian worship; that pagan holidays such as Christmas, Easter and Hallowe'en are "Christian," and that the Sabbath and annual Feasts of God, along with the LAW of God, has been "nailed to the cross."

There are MILLIONS who live in this fantasy world of false doctrine.

Notice what Paul said about the state of one's life following baptism, and the deep spiritual meaning of being immersed in a watery grave: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:11,12). And what IS sin? Sin is the transgression of the LAW, not the selective proscriptions of a church organization! Millions regularly break God's Sabbath each week, while they believe they are dwelling under "grace."

This is nothing short of turning "grace" into "licentiousness." which means "permission to sin!" Their leaders

grant them LICENSE to sin! Of course, they don't KNOW they are sinning by observing utterly PAGAN practices; having PAGAN symbols of sex and fertility in their homes each Christmas, and reveling in PAGAN symbols at Ishtar (Easter) time. But ignorance of the law is no excuse with God. Just as ignorance of the effects of gravity and inertia do not protect a child who might fall from a height, so ignorance of God's Sabbath and His Ten Commandments does not exempt a "believer" from the consequences of SIN.

Study carefully Paul's sixth chapter of Romans, and understand! He wrote, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13). And what IS "righteousness"? Let the Bible answer: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172).

Exactly! Righteousness means to be "right with God." One cannot be right with God when one is regularly ignoring His Ten Commandments.

Paul went on to say, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

"Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:15-18). HOW PLAIN! Now, you become the SERVANT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS — servants of righteousness! We are not "under the law" in the sense that the penalty of sin, which is DEATH, no longer hangs over us. We are FREE from the penalty of DEATH for all eternity, because God has extended His bounteous GRACE; His love, mercy, and forgiveness, to us!

Paul then asks the same question I asked earlier: Since you are free to go if a kindly judge has canceled all your previous traffic tickets, are you now free to go out and kill pedestrians with your car? Are you free to park in "no parking" zones; to drive the wrong way on a one-way street; to run all the red lights and stop signs?

Paul puts it this way, "What then, shall we SIN [break God's laws] because we are not under the law, but under grace, GOD FORBID!" (Romans 6:15).

Millions confidently assume they are NOT SINNING when they observe pagan festivals, trample all over God's Sabbaths, both weekly and annual, observe the day of the Sun, and accept pagan traditions such as the immortality of the soul. As Christ said, "Many shall come in my name, and shall deceive many!"

The second great part of the formula for salvation is "BE BAPTIZED." But the baptism is NO GOOD if it is devoid of true repentance prior to the immersion! Many have "received Christ" in their minds, but, even though they sincerely wanted to change their lives, they did not know what real repentance meant! They did not know about the Ten Commandments; about the Sabbath days; about the annual holy days of God. They did not know that the "immortality of the soul" is a PAGAN concept, and is found nowhere in scripture! They were deceived! A deceived person can be the nicest person you ever met; generous, honest, faithful, likeable, sociable, sincere! Being deceived by its nature connotes HONESTY! They HONESTLY believed and accepted what their church taught them.

But they are sincerely wrong!

Now, let's understand the THIRD great part of the formula for salvation.

"And Ye Shall Receive the Holy Spirit"

You and I were born with a carnal mind. Do not misunderstand the word. It simply means "fleshly." Paul wrote, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

You and I were born with a natural inclination to be rebellious against God. This is not an insulting statement, or one intended to impugn or ridicule. It is the way God PLANNED His physical creation.

Without the presence of God's Holy Spirit, the carnal mind is filled with vanity, jealousy, lust, and greed. It is SELF-centered; selfish, egocentric! The carnal mind is extremely self-pitying, defensive, incapable of seeing the self in its true light.

Consider the case of Saul, the angry, bitter, vicious torturer and murderer of helpless men and women. Armed with a special commission he himself sought, Saul was headed to Damascus on a witch hunt for Christians. As a vicious agent of the Sanhedrin in Judah, he was engaged in deliberate persecution; even torture, of those who had accepted Christ.

Here is what happened to him: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

"And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

"And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

"And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

"And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

"And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

"And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (Acts 9:1-9).

In Saul's case, Jesus Christ intervened PERSONALLY! He struck him down, first with a blinding light, then with a thunderous voice! This experience SHOCKED Saul to the depths of his being! Like the young nobleman, he then asked if there was anything he should DO. Jesus did not say, "Just believe on me, Saul!" No, He said Saul should go on into Damascus, and he would be told what he should do.

When Saul opened his eyes, he could not see! Blind, stricken, he totally lost his appetite. For 72 long hours that great, powerful voice reverberated through his mind. For three days and three nights he fasted and prayed! He must have thought of the terrified faces and the cries of pain from his previous victims! He had to have pondered his recent activities; his vehement anger and rage. Though the verse is disputed, it seems Christ told him that he found it very difficult to "kick" against his own conscience; his misgivings! Saul was trying to cover up his "suspicion" that Jesus just MAY have been the true Messiah by his strenuous physical activities. Each time he arrested and caused some poor person to blaspheme, he reinforced his own sneering disbelief.

How long did it take to convert Saul? About TEN SECONDS!

There was no time for Saul to study out doctrine point by point. He was not dragged, kicking and screaming, from his childhood fables, assumptions, myths and false doctrines like so many today. He did not begrudgingly "prove" by careful study point by point, and then eventually "decide" he would "join the church"!

Like the 144,000 who will REPENT in an INSTANT when they see the awesome heavenly signs (Revelation 6:12-16), Saul was shocked into an instant awareness that JESUS CHRIST IS UP THERE, AND HE IS GOD! Going suddenly blind SHOCKED Saul! He knew in an instant that he was in rebellion against God Almighty Himself! The FEAR OF GOD was thrown into him. Millions of smug, self-righteous human beings who cling to their own prejudices have never remotely known the fear of God. But Saul now saw himself in contrast to the mighty power of God. He knew he had grievously SINNED against God, and against those helpless, terrified victims! He had been spitefully attacking Jesus Christ!

Notice what happened next: "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord."

"And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth [and we can well imagine he did this for the bulk of the time!],

"And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

"Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

"And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

"For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

"And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

"And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

"And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:10-20).

What an amazing transformation! This is the greatest Bible example of an instantaneous conversion! Saul was changed from possessing a hawkish, vicious, angry carnal mind to a meek, humble, self-effacing converted mind by the power of God! He spent many, many HOURS in heartbroken PRAYER, pouring out his heart to Christ and to the Father. Then, when his sight was restored, he LEARNED from many of those who had been with Christ for over three years; heard their personal witness. But now, a NEW DIMENSION had been added to Paul. Now, he had the very HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, linked with his human spirit, which had produced a tender, innocent, humble, questing "new creature in Christ" within his mind! Now, he HUNGERED AND THIRSTED for true righteousness. Suddenly, all those scriptures about the Messiah, such as those found in Isaiah 9, Isaiah 11, and Isaiah 52 and 53, became CLEAR to him!

What had happened was, Paul had been shocked into REPENTANCE!

To repent means not only to be emotionally SORRY and CONTRITE — it also means to CHANGE! It means to "turn around and go the other way!" Saul became the Apostle Paul, one of the most deeply converted and effective instruments in God's hands for doing His work in all history. He was inspired to write 14 books of your Bible! His life's work and example are admired by countless millions of people.

Now, notice that receiving God's Holy Spirit means being BEGOTTEN of God; becoming a little, developing child of the Father — begotten, but not yet born!

First, what does it mean to be "born of God"?

"Ye Must Be Born Again"

The first time in all history anyone had heard the phrase "born again" was when Jesus told Nicodemus he should be born again. Today, millions think being "born again" is the same thing as becoming a Christian; receiving, or accepting Christ. Constantly, people say "I am a born again Christian." The news media refer to celebrities or politicians who have become religions as "born again Christians." Many believe the only proof one has been "born again" is when one "speaks with tongues." But what ignorance! What misunderstanding! Read carefully the original account, and understand!

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of 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.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee. Ye must be born again.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:1-8).

Wind is invisible! Winds in hurricanes or tornados can destroy large buildings; toss aircraft, automobiles and ships about like toys. Winds can have POWER! But you cannot see wind, or air. Are you willing to BELIEVE Christ, as well as "believe ON" Christ? John's account of Jesus' statement to Nicodemus is written in Greek.

The Greek word for "born" is gennao. Unlike our English language, the Greek word means the entire process of birth, including conception. Therefore, it can be rendered either "begotten" or "born."

Notice that Christ said one must be born (or begotten) of or by WATER even before He referred to the Holy Spirit. This is an obvious reference to water baptism, which Paul covers thoroughly in Romans 6. Baptism pictures the death of the old man (or woman) by burial, and then the resurrection of the "new man" or woman, coming up out of the water, as if coming up out of the grave.

Paul wrote, "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation [conduct] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:21-24).

There is a NEW CREATION at the moment when one receives God's Holy Spirit! Paul said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Now, think! There was a moment when you did not exist. Then, in only a moment, you CAME INTO EXISTENCE! When was that moment? It was at the instant your father's life-giving spermatozoon united with the fertile egg in your mother's womb! It took those TWO lives to create your ONE life! From that tiny, microscopic beginning, a NEW CREATION took place.

You were CREATED by your parents. You did not spontaneously come into being.

God's great physical creation, and the supreme pinnacle of that creation, man, presents to us a pattern; a type of His SPIRITUAL creation which is in process. Let's notice how Christ explained this to Nicodemus.

He said "That which is born of flesh IS flesh." Are you flesh? Of course. Are you composed of spirit? Of course not! Simple. No problem here at all. And, it doesn't matter whether we are understanding the phrase to mean either born or begotten, for the same principle applies. You and I were once begotten of the flesh. We WERE at that moment flesh, and we still are! If and when we are begotten of the SPIRIT, that which is newly created is SPIRIT, and is not flesh!

Christ said, "...that which is born of the Spirit IS SPIRIT." What did Nicodemus think Jesus Christ meant? He did not ask, "Lord, how long must I `tarry' at a `tarry meeting?" He did not ask, "How long before I can `pray through'?" He did not ask, "Must I speak in an unknown tongue?" He asked the most logical question which instantly came into his mind, instead. He asked, "How can one enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

Nicodemus understood Jesus Christ to be speaking of BIRTH, just like one would speak of the birth of a calf, or a colt, or a litter of puppies! He did not interpret Jesus' words to mean anything remotely connected with "Pentecostalism."

Christ then explained. He clearly told Nicodemus that He, Christ, was speaking SPIRITUALLY. He said, "The wind blows where it listeth [wherever it will], and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). So when one is finally BORN of the Spirit of God, one becomes SPIRIT! So when we are finally BORN OF THE SPIRIT we will be LIKE THE WIND; powerful, but invisible!

You were born of fleshly parents. You are FLESH. When you are finally BORN of your SPIRIT Parent, you will become SPIRIT!

Christ said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Notice, " Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15:50-52).

Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples many times following His resurrection. He would MATERIALIZE before their startled eyes, instantly appearing as if He were FLESH, yet now having become the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Notice one outstanding example: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

"And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord" (John 20:19-21). They were inside a CLOSED ROOM when suddenly Jesus "materialized" in front of their eyes.

Notice another example: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

"The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

"Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

"And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:24-29). These disciples were UNWILLING witnesses! It was only when "doubting Thomas" actually put his hand within the gaping spear wound and his fingers into the wounds in

Jesus' hands that he believed!

Christ was now BORN OF GOD by the resurrection from the dead! He is called the "FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN" (Romans 8:29). Just as He told Nicodemus, He was now "like the wind," completely INVISIBLE to the human eye, unless He wanted to manifest Himself supernaturally! As a SPIRIT being He could pass through stone walls! He now dwelt in the SPIRIT world once more, not bound by material things.

You and I are destined to become LIKE Christ — BORN OF GOD! John wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Be LIKE HIM? But He is SPIRIT! Exactly! This is what Christ plainly said! Notice the detailed description of this change from flesh to spirit; from human to divine, described by the Apostle Paul: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

"Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

"And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

"But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

"All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

"It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

"It is sown a natural body [FLESH; subject to death and decay!]; it is raised a spiritual body [SPIRIT; composed of spirit, no longer subject to death]. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:35-44).

Millions reject this fabulous, beautiful truth. Millions of professing Christians think they will waft off to heaven as a disembodied "immortal soul." But the words "immortal soul," or "immortality of the soul" are NOWHERE to be found in the Bible.

The Truth About "The SOUL"

When God created our first parent He said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken: for DUST THOU ART, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19).

God was talking to Adam. He was talking to the conscious man! He did not tell Adam that only his body was composed of the elements of the earth: but that "Adam" was really a "soul" locked within a temporal, physical

body! No, He said Adam WAS "red clay" or, "red mud" (for that is the real meaning of the Hebrew word translated "dust").

Notice! "And the Eternal God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man BECAME A LIVING SOUL!" (Genesis 2:7).

Remember, the Bible was not written in the English language. Mostly, the Bible was written in Greek and Hebrew; Hebrew being used predominately in the Old Testament, and Greek in the New.

There was no such word in existence at the time the Bible was written as "soul." It is an English word, with an almost exclusively ecclesiastical connotation!

Actually, as you will see, the English word "soul" should be virtually expunged from the English language, and replaced with many possible synonyms which connote the real meaning of the Hebrew word nephesh, for the Hebrew word nephesh is the word from which the English word "soul" is translated! Naturally, then, our quest for knowledge and understanding centers around the meaning of the word nephesh!

What is the meaning, then, of the HEBREW word nephesh?

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance says, "(5315) nephesh; a breathing creature, i.e. animal or (abstr.) vitality: used very widely in a literal, accommodated or figurative sense (bodily or mental); appetite, beast, body, breath, creature, dead, desire, contented, fish, ghost, greedy, he, heart, (jeopardy of life; in jeopardy), lust, man, me, mind, mortally, one, own, person, pleasure, (her, him, my, thy) self, them (your) selves, slay, soul, tablet, they, thing, will, would have it."

What a list! You see, the Hebrew word nephesh has to do with "being"! As such, it has a wide usage, concerning the physical, animal, breathing LIFE of flesh and blood creatures! Notice that it can be translated "dead" or even "beast" or "creature" as well as "lust," "mortally," or "person."

Did you know that the Hebrew word nephesh is used several times of lower life forms PRIOR to ever being used concerning man in the Bible?

Notice Genesis 1:20 where nephesh is rendered, "moving creature," verse 21 where the same word is rendered, "living creature," verse 24 where nephesh is rendered, "living creature; and beast, verse 25 where it is rendered "beast," referring to whales, fish, crustaceans and lower life forms inhabiting the sea!

In this graphic description of the creation of all of the animals and sea-dwelling creatures, the word nephesh is used again and again!

Naturally even the superstitious translators who were heavily affected by Roman Catholic and Anglican doctrines in the sixteen hundreds did not dare render the word nephesh as "soul" in these passages!

Now, turn to and read Numbers 19:11: "He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days." In this scripture, the laws of purification under the Levites are discussed. A person would be considered "unclean" if he touched the decaying corpse or body of an animal or another man!

Notice verse 22. "And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul [nephesh!] that toucheth it shall be unclean until even."

The very same word rendered "soul" in verse 22 (which should be translated "individual," or "person") is rendered "DEAD BODY" in verse 11! Get it into your mind: firmly fixed once and for all! The SAME WORD

which is translated "soul" in literally dozens of places in the Old Testament is here translated "dead body"!

Now turn to and read Ezekiel 18, verses 4 and 20. "Behold, all souls [nephesh] are mine; as the soul [nephesh] of the father, so also the soul [nephesh] of the son is mine: the soul [nephesh] that sinneth IT [that `soul' or nephesh] shall DIE!" Here, it would be far clearer if the English were rendered "Behold all persons are mine; as the person of the father, so the person of the son; the individual that sins HE shall die!"

The thrust of the scripture is individual, personal responsibility before God! What God is saying through Ezekiel is that no one can render excuses for sin; that we cannot "pass the buck" by pointing to others as a causal factor of our sins!

This scripture is not given as a lesson in whether or not souls are "immortal" or mortal; yet, because the scripture very plainly says that "the soul that sinneth, IT SHALL DIE," it represents a further, powerfully conclusive PROOF that the Hebrew word for "soul" (nephesh) means physical, mortal, temporal life, and has nothing whatsoever to do with immortality!

So, ask yourself "does the Bible say, whatever the Bible means by the word `soul,' that souls can DIE?" Your obvious answer is YES!

Then, with your own eyes, you are beholding the absolute proof that the word translated into English "soul" has nothing whatsoever to do with immortality or spirituality; but has to do with physical, carnal, flesh-and-blood human and animal existence!

The word nephesh is found in 243 different Bible passages, and translated in 11 different ways. Notice that the expression "the dead" is translated directly from the Hebrew word nephesh in the following passages: Leviticus 19:22; 21:1, 22:4; Numbers 5:2; Numbers 6:11.

The same word (nephesh) which is translated "soul" in most cases is rendered "dead body" in Numbers 9:6, 7, 10.

It is translated as "body" in Leviticus 21:11; Numbers 6:6; 19:11, 13, and also in Haggai 2:1, 3.

What About "Soul" in the New Testament?

The Greek word psuche is the only word that is translated "soul" in the New Testament. You will find the word 105 times in the New Testament, of which it is translated "soul" only 58 times, but can also be rendered "life" (40 times), "mind" (three times), and "heart," "heartily," "us" and "you" (one time each).

The Greek word psuche is the exact Greek rendering of the Hebrew word nephesh and is used in the same way throughout the New Testament.

For example, psuche is used of the lower animals, just as you have seen nephesh used of lower life forms in the first chapter of the book of Genesis! In Revelation 8:9, the Greek word psuche (remember this is the ONLY word which is ever used for the word "soul" in the English language) is rendered "life." Notice also Revelation 16:3, where lower life forms are spoken of, yet the word "soul" is used. Read that last scripture carefully! It describes one of the horrible plagues yet to fall upon the land and the sea, and says "every living soul DIED"! Here is one more New Testament proof that the word "soul" as it found its way into the English language means a being, or living thing, which can DIE! In this case, it is used of various forms of life (of which there are thousands) in the sea!

The Greek word psuche is also used for an individual on many occasions. In making out a flight plan when I

was piloting a jet airplane, we would have to include the information of how many persons were aboard that flight. All airlines dispatchers do the same things. Oftentimes, many pilots calling in their flight plans would say they had so many "souls" on board, using the word interchangeably for individuals, or persons. When a newspaper headline speaks of so many "souls" being lost in the sinking of a ship, it is using the word in much the same way as it occurs 14 different times in the Bible! For proof, read Acts 2:41-43; 3:23; 7:14; 27:37; Romans 2:9; 13:1; I Corinthians 15:45; James 5:20; I Peter 3:20; II Peter 2:14; Revelation 6:9; 18:13; 20:4.

In those passages, the Greek word psuche is used for the life of man, which can be destroyed, or lost.

A classic example of where the translators have tampered with the English in translating from the Greek is found in Matthew 16:25 and 26.

Notice the way it is rendered in the King James Version: "For whosoever will save his life [psuche] shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life [psuche] for my sake shall find it.

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul [psuche]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul [psuche]?"

Obviously, since the identical Greek word is used in both passages; and since it is rendered differently in verse 26 (soul) from the way it is used in verse 25 (life), it was a translator's decision as to changing the way he rendered this Greek word psuche in the two verses!

To be honest, and to be fair with the word, it should have been rendered the same in both passages! Here, it is obvious the word should better be rendered "life," just as it was rendered in verse 25! For, after all, it is your life you can lose and what can you give in exchange for your LIFE?

The point is, the Greek word psuche is capable of nearly as many applications as is the Hebrew word nephesh, and can even be used of man's moods, passions and feelings!

The word psuche, for example, is translated "mind," "us," "you," "heart" and "heartily."

By no stretch of the imagination can this Greek word EVER connote anything which is immortal, or "extra physical," in the sense of being spiritual.

The English word "soul" in the Old Testament is always taken from the Hebrew nephesh and does NOT mean anything immortal; just as the English word "soul" in the New Testament is taken from the Greek word psuche, and only means mortal, temporal, human physical MAN, who is subject to death. Instead, the Bible speaks of the death of the human, physical being, and the resurrection FROM the dead!

Christ said, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth [makes them alive!] them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5:21).

Moments later, He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also. because he is the Son of man.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [judgment]" (John 5:24-29).

It is plain from this statement that there are at least TWO different resurrections! Actually, there are THREE! The first is for the "dead in Christ." The second is for all those who never heard the gospel; never had a chance for salvation (Revelation 20:5). The third is for those who had a chance, and rejected it; the incorrigible wicked. For an in-depth study of this surprising fact, call or write for my two-part sermon on two audio tapes called "Resurrection I and II."

Notice the state of the dead at the time of the resurrection: "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15:17-20).

Death is clearly described as a deep, profound SLEEP! The newly-begotten "creature in Christ," which is SPIRIT, not flesh, does not die! The body dies, but the spirit simply SLEEPS! Some rebellious, argumentative teachers scornfully dismiss this beautiful truth, calling it "soul sleeping"!

They don't know what they are talking about. There IS no such thing as an "immortal soul" in man, but there IS a "human spirit!" That spirit, which resides in the frontal lobes of your brain, is what lifts man above the animals and all other creatures. It is where your CONSCIENCE resides; the place in your brain where your decision-making capability resides. With the human spirit, our brains become capable of introspection; of conscious choice; of discerning the difference between right and wrong. The human spirit, together with our brain, gives us our individual personalities.

Notice, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding (Job 32:8).

David's prayer was also uttered by Christ as He died. David said, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth" (Psalm 31:5).

Solomon knew that the human spirit is where our consciences reside; that portion of our brain which allows us to look deeply within ourselves in introspection: "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly" (Proverbs 20:27).

Paul wrote how the Holy Spirit, when it is coupled with our human spirit, makes us a child of God — begotten — a "new creature in Christ." He said, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Of course! In the same manner your father's life bore witness with your mother's life that you are the child of your parents!

When Paul contrasted the ancient earthly tabernacle with God's coming heavenly kingdom, he wrote, "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:22, 23). Read his famous 11th chapter about all those men and women who "died in faith, not having received the promises."

Paul showed the Corinthians that there is coming a CHANGE from flesh to spirit; from human to divine: "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [There's that word again! It means `we shall not all die'], but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:51-53). Immortality is not something we possess now. It is something we must "put on" at the time of the resurrection, or the instantaneous change at Christ's return.

Notice how the Bible continually describes death as a deep, profound SLEEP — oblivious to the passing of time. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ [who are described as `asleep!'] shall rise first:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (I Thessalonians 4:13-17).

And where will Christ BE when He returns to this earth? Notice what your Bible says, "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zechariah 14:3, 4).

Christ said He is coming again! He said, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13).

When the disciples stood gazing as Christ was taken up, a powerful angel said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

Millions have misunderstood the expression "caught up to meet the LORD `in the air.'" Air is PHYSICAL. It is the atmosphere of this earth. It is composed of many different gases; primarily oxygen and carbon dioxide, along with hydrogen, helium, and many rare gases. Air has weight. Clouds form in the lower atmosphere, closest to the earth. Christ is coming back IN THE CLOUDS, just as He said! "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

Now, you know the three-part FORMULA for salvation! Peter said "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized..." (Acts 2:38-40). Are you one who God is CALLING? Is your mind open to God's truth? Can you receive the truth with GLADNESS, as they did? If YOU recognize your need to repent and be baptized, so you can be begotten as a child of God, please call our office immediately, and let us relay to you the name and telephone number of the nearest minister of the Intercontinental Church of God to your home.

Those of you who have a personal computer can receive information about the nearest hosted fellowship group or chartered church by looking into our web site at www.garnertedarmstrong.ws and either E-mailing them, or looking for the section about the local churches. There are DOZENS of booklets, articles, brochures and even audible sermons posted there, so you can do all the studying you wish!

May God be with you, and cause you to heed His gracious call!

-End-

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