

Why You Were Born?

Can You be Born into the Spirit World?

What you are about to read will shock you, for it will challenge age-old concepts about the very purpose of human life. *What are you*, after all? Are you—the deeply private, thinking, feeling, hoping, sensitive human person—the *real you*—a "soul" imprisoned inside a temporary physical body? Are you a reincarnation of a former life, as some believe?

What happens when you die?

In this booklet, you will see some of the most puzzling mysteries of human existence made PLAIN. Finally, you will come to understand one of the greatest mysteries of the universe: your own *astounding* human potential!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

How long has it been since you looked up articles in major encyclopedias like the *Americana*, *Britannica*, or *World Book* about *yourself*? How long since you studied how marvelous is your skeletal, nervous, digestive, circulatory, muscular systems; how the human eye or ear is formed; how you see, hear, feel, walk, and talk? When did you last study, then ponder an article about the *air* you breathe constantly; that incredible substance that keeps you alive? How long since you looked up articles about *water*, and saw how much of it is contained in air; in your own body?

You are a living, breathing, physical organisms unique human being whose life is *sustained* by air, water and food. You are in many ways a very strong, enduring organism, yet in others very fragile, susceptible to sickness and disease, to accident, to death.

We all know "nothing is surer than death and taxes, " but few seem to know *what really happens* at death. Our courts often disagree on *what death is and when it occurs*. Those who are said to be *brain* dead are kept living in a comatose state, like a vegetable, by life support systems in hospitals. Who has not heard about sensational cases involving "the right to die"?

We know when our hearts cease supplying oxygen-bearing blood to the brain and our bodies, we die. Yet, for a considerable period of time following heart stoppage, vital organs are yet alive.

Most have some concept of death. But is that concept based on ancient mythology, on past religious training, or upon the Bible, which is the *handbook* from the Creator of mankind about who we are, *what* we are, and WHY we are?

We know the bible says the "wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). It also says it is appointed to all men to die once, but *after this* comes the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Paul wrote, "For the wages of sin is death: but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). But worldly church tradition says, "No, that is not correct! You already have immortal life—you have a *soul* which will *live forever*, either in heaven or in hell. " But God's Word insists *death* and *eternal life* are two opposites! The one is FINAL, the *end of life!*

Further, the Bible says eternal life is the gift of God *through Christ*; not something inherently possessed by every person.

Job asked, "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, *till my change*

come" (Job 14:14). Christ said..... the hour is coming ... when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live ... marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves 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 5:25-29).

Paul was inspired to write..... if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians 15:13-14). This quotation is from the famous "resurrection chapter" where the whole subject is thoroughly explained.

You and I know we are *temporal*; a fragile, transitory life of a physical, chemical existence which can be abruptly *terminated* in any number of ways. Deprive of us air, and we die. Of water, same result. Of food, the same. It is only a matter of *time* in each case. By studying articles in encyclopedias we can come to understand the incredible, miraculous creatures we are; how we breathe, walk, talk, hear, feel, see, think, reason, react, sneeze, cough, laugh, cry, grow older, and finally die. But in *no encyclopedia* can we find WHY we are here—what is our final *destiny*!

Is not the most IMPORTANT information of ALL the WHY of it all?

Being Born Again-What Does it Mean?

A signboard outside a local church near my home proclaimed, "Those who are born of God are sure to resemble Him." I'm sure the members of the church were pleased by the slogan; sure they were happy that thousands of people driving by on the busy highway had to see it.

But did the pastor really *understand* the words on his signboard? Before you reply in the affirmative, consider:

The first time in all history anyone heard the phrase "born again" is recorded in John chapter 3. Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

Who today has not heard about "born-again Christians"? Millions believe they have been *born again*. The goal of thousands of sermons is to cause people to be born again Christians. But did Jesus mean we should have a religious *experience*; including believing on Jesus, asking for forgiveness of sins, and receiving God's Holy Spirit; that *this experience* is "being born again"?

Nicodemus' startled reply helps us understand the meaning of the phrase as Jesus originally spoke it. Remember, He spoke in *Aramaic*, and His words were translated into the language of John's Gospel, which was Greek. The Greek word for "born" is *gennao*, from which you will no doubt recognize some of our English words, like enGENder; GENerate, GENerations, etc.

However, as distinct from our English word "born," the Greek *gennao* means the entire process of birth, including conception, fetal development and parturition. It can be rendered either "begotten" or "born," depending on the context. Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance* lists the word as including the following applications: "...to *procreate* (prop. of the father, but by extens. of the mother); fig. to *regenerate*: -bear, beget, be born, bring forth, conceive, be delivered of, gender, make, spring."

Notice that the Greek expression Jesus used could easily be translated in a number of different ways.

However, from Nicodemus' startled reply, it is obvious the rendering "born" is correct.

It is also obvious Nicodemus did not understand Jesus' remarks in spiritual context. He did not think for one minute Jesus was talking about the experience of "speaking in tongues," or "receiving Jesus." Jesus used a phrase which meant literal *birth*. Nicodemus heard it that way. He understood it that way. He answered by another question, which proves what Jesus' statement had conveyed to his mind.

Nicodemus' startled retort was not deliberately off-color. He was so amazed by Jesus' statement he merely referred to the *impossibility* of what Jesus' words had conveyed to him. Read what he said. He asked how it was possible for a grown man to *enter into his mother's womb* the second time, and be "born again." "Can there be *any doubt in your mind* what Nicodemus understood Jesus to say?"

Why, then, don't the churches understand that Jesus was talking about a *literal* rebirth; that He was not referring to some ecstatic experience, or an emotional "acceptance" of Christ at an evangelistic rally or church revival? The meaning of Jesus' words will come completely clear as you read the surprising number of scriptures bearing on this most important subject.

Now, notice! Jesus plainly said "that which is born of the flesh *is flesh*." You and I are physical creatures, sustained by breathing air, eating food, drinking water. Were you born? Of course. Were you born of *flesh*? Of course. *Are you then, FLESH?* These seem nonsensical, don't they—ridiculous questions? Can you answer the next questions as simply?

Jesus said, "that which is born of the spirit *is spirit!*" Are you composed of spirit? Of course not. Are you like the wind, invisible, powerful, able to go quickly from place to place, *unseen*? Ridiculous.

Yet, Jesus said, plainly..... that which is *born* of the spirit *IS SPIRIT!*" He explained, likening the true spiritual rebirth to the *wind*, which, while exerting power; blowing "wheresoever it will," is *invisible*; cannot be seen!

Has Anyone Yet Been Born Again?

Now for the final question: Have you been born again? The only answer you can give in the light of Jesus' statements is "no," for you are yet flesh, not spirit. Supposing you had *never heard* the expression "born again" previously. If an adult said to you, "I have been *born again*," you would look at him as if he were insane! You would, like Nicodemus, be wholly puzzled by such a statement. Perhaps you would see humor in it. You might respond, "But you couldn't have been born again, or you'd be holding a baby rattle, and sucking your thumb!" But because you have heard the phrase many times; heard it applied by the churches to a religious *experience*, you have *assumed* they must know what it means.

Many years ago, an elderly lady asked me about Jesus' statements to Nicodemus about being born again. She was a widow; had lived with her husband, a Methodist minister, for over fifty years. All her adult life, she had been taught that being "born again" meant a spiritual *experience*, "receiving Christ..... being *saved*". I patiently explained the passage verse by verse, word by word. I went through many other scriptures showing the nature of man; that a man dies as does the beast; that all have one breath (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20).

I asked her, "Were you born of the flesh?" She said, "Yes." I grasped my forearm—said, "I *am flesh*, born of the flesh!" I touched her forearm, and said, "*You* are flesh, too, aren't you?" She admitted she was.

I said, "I am not *spirit—for I am visible*. You are not composed of *spirit*, for I can *see* you. We are both composed of *flesh!*"

I then painstakingly went through Jesus' statement, "That which is *born of the Spirit IS SPIRIT*"; showed how spirit is *invisible*; reminded her how Jesus was able to materialize and dematerialize through stone walls following His resurrection. I explained that Christ had been changed from flesh to spirit at the resurrection; showed her that Christ is called the "firstborn among many brethren."

I finally posed the question: "So have you yet been born of the Spirit?"

Her answer? "Oh, *yes!* Praise the Lord!"

I was shocked, but taught a valuable lesson. I learned that some human minds are *closed* to the truth of God; that *years* of false teaching, continuously reinforced, cannot be dislodged no matter how clearly and logically the truth is presented.

This dear lady could not see the truth—f or it would have meant repudiating all those sermons her beloved husband had given to the contrary.

I doubt anyone could have explained those simple texts any more patiently or clearly. What about you? Can you see the truth right before your eyes, in your own Bible? The answer will be evident by the time you finish reading.

The Bible describes a *begettal* prior to the final spiritual birth—In exactly the same fashion as God designed human reproduction! Creation was not completed with the Garden of Eden, it was only begun. Almost no one understands the awesome plan of God; the *great purpose* He is working out on this earth. Almighty God is *reproducing after His own kind!* Even as we human beings were first *conceived*, and then, following nine months of fetal development, born as little babies, so each child of God is first *begotten* of God through His Holy Spirit, trained, taught, put through trials and temptations, then finally born of God, either through the resurrection from the dead, or through being instantaneously changed from flesh to spirit at the coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

Christ the Firstbegotten

Jesus Christ was the very first human being to be begotten of God. Paul wrote that Christ was "...the image of the invisible God, the *first born* of every creature [Greek: *Prototokos*; first begotten or firstborn]: For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is *before* [both in time, and supremacy] all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the Beginning, *the First born from the dead*, that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:15-17).

Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "And again, when He bringeth in the *first begotten* into the world, He saith, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him' " (Hebrews 1:6).

Christ is the Author of salvation; the first human being—God in human flesh—Who had the indwelling presence, without measure, *from the time of His birth*, of the Holy Spirit of God the Father.

Not only was Christ the first human *begotten* of God; He was the first born of God..... now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept [those who died]. For since by man came death, by

man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: *Christ the firstfruits*, afterward [not a moment before] they that are Christs [those who are converted Christians] at *His coming* (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). Please note that scripture very carefully! *When will the dead in Christ finally become born of God?* Not until the moment of Christ's Second Coming!

Following His resurrection, Christ manifested Himself to His shocked, unwilling disciples many times. He walked through walls; suddenly materialized before their startled eyes (John 20:19). Even as He said to Nicodemus, He was now "like the wind, " with Divine power; able to become *invisible*. He had been born of God. He had *been changed* by the power of God, through His resurrection, from human flesh to Divine Spirit!

God says, "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; [flesh, subject to decay] it is raised in *incorruption* [Spirit]: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in *glory*: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in *power*. It is sown [placed in the grave] a natural [fleshly] body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body ["that which is born of flesh *is flesh*"] and there is a spiritual body ["that which is born of the spirit *is spirit*"] ... and as we have borne the image of the earthy [born of our fleshly parents], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [*born of God, changed from flesh into SPIRIT!*].

"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 [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" (1 Corinthians 15:41-52).

Study those words carefully! You see how perfectly they help explain Jesus' words to Nicodemus? God's Word does not portray a "soul" leaving the body, wafting off to heaven or some place in "purgatory." Instead, the Bible reveals a *resurrection* will take place; that human flesh will be changed into spirit. As Christ told Nicodemus, you and I have been born of earthly parents. We are weak, subject to physical debility and death. But when we shall be *born of the Spirit*, we shall *become* Spirit—shall become *composed* of Spirit! So says your Bible!

Do You Have God's Holy Spirit?

Recently, a friend told me, "I consider myself a 'born-again' Christian... " This person is not a member of God's church; uses profanity, smokes, drinks to excess, and pursues the materialistic goals of this world. While he would be embarrassed to label himself a "sinner," he freely tramples underfoot God's Ten Commandments. Certainly, he is not exemplary of all those who claim to be "born again." Yet, he had, at some time or other in his life, gone through the usual experience of "receiving Christ," perhaps at a revival, or evangelistic campaign. In his own mind, he considers himself to be a "born-again Christian," because, while he does know he needs to *obey* God; to *quit sinning* by using profanity, smoking, Sabbath-breaking, etc., he *believes on Jesus*. *To him*, he is "born again."

Yet, this man has never understood *what is sin* (1 John 3:4); that he is commanded to "repent, and be baptized," for the receiving of God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). God says His Spirit is given to those who *obey* Him (Acts 5:32).

What does the Bible say about receiving God's Holy Spirit? Paul wrote, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is *none of His*" (Romans 8:9).

These are not my words, but the Holy Word of God. Do you own a Cadillac? You either do, or you do not. If you do, then it is a *fact* that you own and drive a Cadillac. If you do not, then it is a *fact* that you do not! Do you have the Spirit of Christ? It is a fact if you do, and it is a fact if you do not. It is an *absolute* that you either *have* God's Spirit or you do not! Owning a Cadillac is not some fanciful state of mind. It is not the way you "think." Being begotten of God, possessing His Holy Spirit within you, is *not* some "idea" or mind set; it is not the way you think or reason. Either you have God's Spirit, or you do not.

Suppose you have purchased a new home. You wish to have power supplied to the home to run your electrical appliances. How do you receive power in your home? Do you go to the living room, sit on the couch, and then "think up" power? Do you set your mind in a certain way, and, *presto*, the lights come on? Do you get into a certain *mood*, or *wish* for it hard enough? Do you "tarry," holding up your hands, praying?

Ridiculous? Of course. You go to the utility company, deposit a check, and they turn on the power supply to your new home.

If you have the power of God's Holy Spirit actually lodged within your brain, connected to the human spirit God gave you at birth, then you have *power* supplied from God. You do not receive this power by inducing a righteous "mood," or setting your mind, or "believing"! Christ gives several required, distinctive steps by which you may receive God's Spirit.

How Does One Receive God's Spirit?

The Bible answers: "*Repent*, and he 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 2:38).

He told His disciples ye shall receive *power*, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you..." (Acts 1:8).

If there is any such thing as a "formula" for salvation, this is it! It consists of three distinct parts, each of which requires deep understanding. There is no OTHER "formula" for salvation—no short cuts—no special individuals who find salvation in *some other way*. Some will argue, "But doesn't the Bible say you must *believe on Jesus* and be saved?" Yes, it does, but your Bible does not contradict itself. It stands or falls on any one of its parts. The Bible says you must accept Christ; that you must not only believe He is the Son of God, but that you must BELIEVE Christ—believe *what He said* is true. But simple "belief" is *not enough!* The devil is a "believer." *He knows* Christ is the Son of God. *He knows* Christ died on the stake for the sins of man, for Satan helped engineer His death. He was *present*, having entered into Judas Iscariot to betray Christ. Does that "belief" mean the devil is "saved"? Blasphemous! Ridiculous! As you see clearly, BELIEF is *not enough* (James 2:19).

Now, let's come to understand that three-part formula for salvation!

Peter said, "*repent*, and be baptized To repent means to be deeply contrite and heart-broken over one's sins. It means self revulsion and the desire to be absolved of guilt through Christ's sacrifice!

Repent of WHAT?

John the Baptist, who came preparing the way for Christ's first coming, preached a message of repentance. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2).

At the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, "... Jesus began to preach, and to say, 'REPENT, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand' " (Matthew 4:17). Christ commands us to repent of our sins; the sins which *took His life!* We repent when we see ourselves in clear contrast to CHRIST; see His wondrous example, His beautiful life, His flawless perfection in contrast to our filthy, unspeakable sins, our wretched attitudes, our selfishness, vanity, and personal ego.

Christ commanded us to repent, then said it is urgent we do so because "the Kingdom of Heaven" is at hand! The other Synoptic Gospels render this statement, "The Kingdom of God is at hand," for it is not the kingdom which is "in" heaven any more than it is the kingdom which is "in" God; but the kingdom which is *ruled from* heaven, coming down *from* God out of heaven (Revelation 21:2-4). The Kingdom will rule ON EARTH! (Revelation 20:4; 5: 10; Isaiah 2:3,4; 11:1-9; Micah 4; Zechariah 14:1-9).

Your dictionary says to *repent* means: "To feel sorry or self-reproachful for what one has done or failed to do; be conscience stricken or contrite."

Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but *sinners to repentance!*" (Luke 5:32). When He commissioned His disciples, He said, "...Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins [forgiveness of lawbreaking] should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke 24:46-47).

To repent means to be deeply broken up, to be heartsick, conscience stricken over having *sinned* against God! All sin is *against God*. David prayed, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned..." (Psalm 51:4), even though he was repenting because of the murder of Uriah, and adultery with Bathsheba.

And *what* is sin? Let your Bible answer: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW!" (1 John 3:45).

Christ *magnified* the Ten Commandments; lifted the "letter" of the law to a spiritual plane, showing that the law is binding not only on human acts, but on human thought. Where it had been a sin to kill, now Christ said it was the equivalent of murder if you hate a fellow human being! Study the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew, and see the many examples of how Christ applied the intent of the law, not just the letter. Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already *in his heart* (Matthew 5:27-28). Which is the *more binding*: the "letter" of the law which made it a sin to complete the act, or the "spiritual intent" of the law which makes it a sin to *lust* about the act?

Unless one *repents*, with the mind and intellect as well as with the "heart," or the emotions; unless one realizes, fully, WHY we are to repent; to repent of doing WHAT—then it is absolutely *impossible* to receive the Holy Spirit of God!

"...And Be Baptized"

Baptism is the second step in a three-part formula, as it were, for salvation. CHRIST is the central figure in the rite of baptism.

The Greek word *baptizo* means to "plunge into," or "to immerse."

Paul wrote, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized [plunged into water; immersed] into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? [In a figure of 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 [live] *in newness of life*" (Romans 6:3-4). Notice carefully that baptism is a symbol of *burial of a dead person*, and the repentant sinner is lowered into water; completely *covered* by water, even as a body is *buried* in the earth.

Dead people are not stood against a tree, only to have a clergyman walk by, toss a handful of dirt into their face, and declare them "buried. "

The popular concept of "sprinkling" and calling it "baptism" is as ludicrous as "sprinkling" dirt on a dead body! "Pouring" is equally ridiculous—and is totally *unauthorized*, as a method of "baptism." The practice of "christening" infants is absolutely ridiculous in the light of God's Word concerning baptism. Baptism is *not for children*. It is to be done only after a mature human being has come to understand WHAT IS SIN; deeply *repent* of that sin; understand the enormity of Christ's sacrifice; ask God to apply that blood sacrifice to atone for the sinner's life, and then be baptized in humble obedience, understanding the sinner's very life is now forfeit; that he or she is considered dead because of sin, but alive in Christ!

When we repent of sin, we realize the wages of sin is death; that we have become worthy of the death penalty because of our sins. Then, we look to Jesus Christ in heartbroken contrition, calling out to God the Father in self revulsion and repentance, asking God, in His limitless mercy, to allow the shed blood of His precious Son and our Savior to be applied to us. We come to realize *our* sins caused the death of Christ; that He died because of *sin*; that He died in our stead, so we do not have to die. We know we richly *deserve* the death penalty for our sins, and we experience an inestimable feeling of relief, of joyous gratitude that God is so *merciful* He allowed His own Son to die for us!

We then willingly approach the baptismal pool in the most sober, repentant manner; keenly aware that the rite of baptism pictures our human life *forfeit*; being "covered up," but only with water as a *symbol*, not with six feet of earth; that just as Christ was buried in a tomb for three days and three nights, so we now, through baptism, are momentarily picturing burial of the old self, as well as the "washing of water by the Word," the figurative "washing away" of our sins.

Jesus Christ Himself, though not needing baptism, was baptized to set us an example! "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comes Thou to me?"

"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness ... and Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water [notice He was down in the water; had been immersed]: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and to a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' " (Matthew 3:13-17).

On the Day of Pentecost following Christ's resurrection, Peter witnessed powerfully of the fact that Christ had indeed *risen* from the dead. Those who saw and heard the miracles were deeply convicted. The scripture we are analyzing, Acts 2:38, as *a formula for salvation* is Peter's command to those thousands who heard him on that day. God's Word says, "Then they that gladly received his word *were baptized*: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

Repentance and Baptism Are a Gift From God

Think about it! These people had *killed Christ!* Yet, God, in His limitless mercy, was offering them *repentance!* You see, even *repentance* comes as a *gift* from God! It is not something we produce out of our own sorrow, or our own goodness, but a gift, granted of God! Notice: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all *our* righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6).

When Peter learned the meaning of the vision concerning the house of Cornelius, and explained it to the Jewish faction in Jerusalem, they finally "held their peace, and glorified God, saying, 'Then hath God also to the Gentiles *granted repentance* unto life' " (Acts 11: 18).

Jesus said, "No man can come unto me [repent, be baptized, and receive God's Spirit] except the Father which hath sent me *draw* him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). Later, explaining, He said "... there are some of you that believe not ... Therefore said I unto you, that no man *can* come unto me, *except it were given unto him* of my Father" (John 6:65).

Do you see? Even *coming unto Christ*; feeling that shame, remorse, and self-revulsion at the knowledge of the greatness of your sins even *that emotion* is a gift from God—something *God grants!*

Now, back to our verse in Acts, the second chapter. The convicted Jewish citizens who repented experienced shock, fear, self-revulsion—they became deeply *heartsick* over what they had done! That's the first step in repentance! Peter and the other apostles' powerful messages came smashing into their consciences like an avalanche, cutting deeply into their minds like a powerful, two-edged sword! Then, when they heard the enormity of their sin—when they were convicted of their terrible sin—realized they could be *baptized, as* an outward symbol of *death and burial* (for sin results in *death*) they were *joyous!*

Notice! "For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die... (Romans 5:8).

There were many Medal of Honor recipients on Iwo Jima during World War II. Several times during that battle, Marines flung themselves over grenades, smothering them with their own bodies to save their comrades! One man flung himself on a grenade, shouting out a warning, just as a *second* grenade came rolling down into the shell hole where he and his buddies were crouching. Quickly, he grabbed it, stuffed it under him. Immediately, *both* went off, killing him instantly! Though injured, his buddies survived.

Such tales of heroism are not commonplace—but they do happen. It's true; mothers have died to save children; a friend has died to save a friend. But do people die to *save an enemy*? Do men give their lives to save people who are trying to kill them?

But God says, "But God commendeth His *love* toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners* CHRIST DIED FOR US! Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, *when we were enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we *shall be saved by His life!*

Can we even *begin* to grasp the great goodness, the generosity, the benevolent mercy of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and His Father and ours? Here was Peter and the rest of the apostles, *offering repentance* to the very ones who, only fifty some days earlier, had *participated in the death of Christ!*

What most of us do not realize is that *we, too*, are guilty of the blood of Christ, because *sin brings death!*

God says, "For the wages of sin is DEATH; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Here are two *opposites*. You do not have eternal life inherent within you! It is the *gift* of God!

Since the wages of sin is DEATH, and God says, "For ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), that means each one of us have come under the penalty of the law, which is DEATH! It is NOT "eternal life" in some other *place*, like a supposed ever-burning fire, but DEATH!

The Wages of Sin

Everybody dies eventually. As Solomon wrote, "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 3:19).

The Bible says the wages of sin is death. But the result of sin is not just the "first death," which is common to all, but *death for all eternity—death by the horrifying method of FIRE* as punishment for sin!

You and I are human beings, subject to aging and death. Each day, thousands die. Millions starve to death every year; tens of thousands perish in wars, through disease, or accidents. But these deaths, whether occurring in impoverished "third-world" countries, or among your own family and loved ones, are *not the penalty for sin*. While it is true sin may *cause* death (as in the case of murder, drunken driving, etc.), the first death is not the penalty for sin. Here is proof from God's Word:

"And as it is appointed unto men *once to die*, but after this the judgment..." (Hebrews 9:27). Yes, the day of *judgment* is to come *after* the first death, no matter the cause.

John writes: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls [Greek: *psuche*, meaning "lives"] of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. *But the rest of the dead* lived not again until the thousand years were finished..." (Revelation 20:4-5). "

Here, we see the resurrected *saints*, converted Christians who are resurrected *at Christ's coming* (1 Corinthians 15:50-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17) reigning *with Christ* (Revelation 2:26; 3:21) for one thousand years, during what is commonly called "the Millennium." And who are "the rest of the dead"? They are those who *did not have a chance for salvation* during their physical lifetimes; countless millions from Asia, Africa, Russia, India, Japan; people from every race and nation who *never heard the Gospel of Christ*, and who *never had an opportunity to consciously reject it*.

Notice how God's Word speaks of the punishment for sin as "the second death": "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection [at Christ's coming]: on such the *second death* hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

John then saw "...a great white throne ... and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books was opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell [Greek: *hades*, meaning "the grave"] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell [the grave] were cast into *the lake of fire*. THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH" (Revelation 20:11-14).

Now, see what we have learned: So far, we have dealt with but two classes of people, the saved and the unsaved. Clearly, the saved are either resurrected at the moment of Christ's Second Coming, or, if alive, changed instantaneously, caught up together with the resurrected saints into the clouds immediately above this earth as Christ returns, then continues descending until "...His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east..." (Zechariah 14:4). Paul wrote, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, *afterward* [and not one moment before] they that are Christ's [the saints] *at His coming*" (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

These converted Christians, now *changed* from human to Divine, will rule with Christ for 1,000 years (Revelation 2:26; 3:21; 5: 10; 20:4).

But the *rest of the dead* are not resurrected until *after* the 1,000 year period of Christ's rule (Revelation 20:5; 11-15). The "rest of the dead" includes every human being who has ever lived, from the time of Adam until the end of the Millennium, who has *never had an opportunity* for salvation! This is the VAST MAJORITY OF ALL MANKIND!

Then, you might ask, "What about the incorrigibles; those who are guilty of unpardonable sins; those who were given ample chance, but who *rejected* salvation?"

The answer to this logical question reveals yet a *third and* final resurrection! Notice that those who are resurrected to "judgment" during the period of the "Great White Throne Judgment" (Revelation 20:11-15) are "judged out of those things which were written in the *books*." The Greek word is *Biblos*, which is translated "Bible" in English. "Bible" really means "books," and unless connected with the word "Holy" can mean any collection of books.

Now, HOW does God judge you and me? *He judges us by the standard of His written Word, the books of the Holy Bible!* God says *He changes not* (Malachi 3:6), and that Jesus Christ is the SAME, yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He does not judge one generation in one way, and another in a different way. Peter wrote, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God [the church!]: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17).

The resurrected millions who have never heard the gospel will be judged out of the *same book*, the books of the Holy Bible, in the *same manner* by the *same God* as you and I! God's standards remain the *same*.

Remember, judgment is not a sentencing! Millions have interpreted these verses in the last half of Revelation 20 as a *final sentencing*, as if God is handing out a *final decision* based upon *past acts; the deeds* already done in a person's lifetime.

Not so. Speaking of the time of the New Heavens and New Earth, God says, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days [no new children will be born—God will supernaturally halt the human reproductive cycle], nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the *days of a tree* are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isaiah 65:17-22).

This strongly implies a *one-hundred year time span* for the Great White Throne Judgment; a period of *one hundred years* AFTER the Millennium when God will judge the *billions* of people who never previously had an opportunity for salvation.

But now, what of those who *reject* God's loving offer of forgiveness?

God says, "And death and hell [Greek: *hades*, meaning "the grave"] were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death*. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"

(Revelation 20:14-15). This final judgment of the wicked is pictured by Christ's parable about Lazarus and the rich man, in Luke's 16th chapter. Peter describes this *lake of fire*, the FINAL judgment of God prior to the New Heavens and New Earth: "Seeing then that all these things [material things] shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [conduct] and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Peter 3:11-12).

John wrote, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there *was no more sea*" (Revelation 21: 1). But earth is the "watery planet"! Life can only exist because of *water*, and air! You are reading of a total change in the very character of planet earth—ITS DESTRUCTION BY FIRE—*changing* this earth from a watery blue planet to one of *molten metal*!

Obviously *no physical life of any kind*—from bacteria to elephants from plants to mankind—can survive such an event!

Even as Nebuchadnezzar saw a being "like the Son of God" (Daniel 3:25) walking about in the midst of the fiery furnace *unharméd*, so the saints, now *SPIRIT IN COMPOSITION*, no longer flesh and blood, will be here on earth to witness this stupendous event.

Remember, then—the wages of sin is *not* the first death, but the *second* death; death by *Gehenna fire*; death for all *eternity* from which there is no resurrection!

But those who *repent* of sins; who are baptized and who receive God's Holy Spirit will receive *eternal life* in God's Kingdom. On them, the second death will have no power.

What is the Holy Spirit?

Is the Holy Spirit a wraith-like, hooded "ghost" of some sort; like *an apparition*? Is the Holy Spirit the *third* member of the Godhead part of the trinity?

Briefly, remember that the archangel said to Mary..... the Holy Spirit [The KJV uses the erroneous word "Ghost" which is a very poor translation. The Greek word is *pneuma*, and means "spirit," not "ghost"] shall come upon thee..." (Luke 1:35). Matthew wrote, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child *of the Holy Spirit*" (Matthew 1: 18).

Clearly, Jesus continually prayed to His "Father" in heaven. He said, giving His outline of prayer (commonly called "the Lord's Prayer"), that we should pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven..." Therefore, since the Bible says Mary was "found with child of the Holy Spirit," *if there were such a thing as a trinity*, Jesus prayed to the *wrong Father*!

God's word uses many different analogies to explain to our human minds the deeply *spiritual* truths about God's Spirit.

Christ likened the Spirit to *wind* (John 3:8); and to *water* (John 7:37-39). Notice the following expressions: "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 there appeared unto them tongues of flame, equally distributed among them, like *fire*. And it sat upon each of them..." (Acts 2:2-3 correct translation).

Here, when God's Spirit was first made available to mankind on the Day of Pentecost, God caused a *sound* to be heard, like a roaring tornado, or a hurricane! He also produced a visible manifestation of His Spirit-like crowns of leaping fire appearing to settle over the head of each of the apostles!

Notice: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out my Spirit* upon all flesh..." (Acts 2:17). This does not say the Father will send some *other person* of the Godhead to mankind, but says He will *pour out* of His Spirit upon them!

When Peter explained these miraculous events, he said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath *shed forth this* which YE NOW SEE AND HEAR!" (Acts 2:32-33).

Notice, God "shed forth" His Spirit. And what did all those thousands of people see and hear? A wraith-like, hooded specter; some "person" called "the Holy Spirit" as a third member of the Godhead? No! They *heard the sound of a rushing mighty wind* and they *saw flickering flames of fire!*

God's Holy Spirit is His great power; it is His method of imparting spiritual *life* to His children! It *enlivens, energizes, begets* His children! By His Spirit, He causes *great miracles* to occur.

Spiritual Begetting

Christ is called the *First begotten* among all humans. "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?"

"And again, when He bringeth the *First begotten* into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Hebrews 1:5-6).

First begotten obviously implies there are to be *others* begotten of God! Paul wrote, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the FIRSTBORN among *many brethren*" (Romans 8:29).

Christ was *born of God* by His resurrection from the dead! He was *changed* from flesh to Spirit; from human to Divine! Though Christ was *very God*, He nevertheless *became flesh*, and He *died* by shedding His life's blood for our sins! (See Revelation 1: 18; cf. Luke 23:45-46; John 19:30).

The Bible says "... we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things [Christ was the *Creator* described in the Old Testament!], in bringing *many sons* unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:9-10).

John wrote, "And the Word [Greek: *Logos*, meaning Spokesman " I was *made flesh*, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14).

In two significant ways, Jesus Christ was *begotten of God!* First, by the limitless POWER of God's Holy Spirit, Christ "emptied Himself" of His Divine status (Philippians 2:7, margin), and was begotten in Mary's womb as a tiny *human embryo!* Not only was Christ therefore "made flesh" (John 1: 14; Hebrews 2:14) and took upon Himself "the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16), but He was *filled with God's Holy Spirit from the womb!* Christ Himself said, "For He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the

Spirit by measure unto Him" (John 3:34).

Thus, not only was Christ a Divine *Spirit Being* Who had *become flesh*, He was also *begotten* of God's Spirit in His mind; filled with God's nature, His wisdom, His Divine grace; His character, goodness, mercy, knowledge, judgment and discernment, compassion and patience—given the very *Divine nature* by the powerful indwelling presence of the Spirit of His Father.

What is a Begettal?

What are you? You are a once only, never before, thinking, feeling, living, breathing human being. How did you *get* here? How did you come to have your life, your being?

Why, from your two *parents!*

For billions of years, *you did not exist!* Then, when your life was only seconds from commencing, there was the *potential* that you might come to be—but YOU did not yet exist!

What existed *before* you did?

Your father and your mother. In your mother's body was a tiny, microscopic egg, which was, *potentially* any one of perhaps hundreds of *thousands* of human beings, depending upon *which* even tinier male spermatozoon united with that egg. Once united, YOU WERE ALREADY IN EXISTENCE. *You*, not any one of millions of possible siblings, which would not have been *you*, but a *different* child of your parents. At the *instant* of fertilization, the exact *instant* a microscopic zygote was formed, *you* were on your way to fetal development and eventual *birth* as a distinctly separate, unique human being. Don't even *think* about disagreeing with what you have just read; don't doubt, for an instant, the *absolute, chemical, scientific, biological truth* about the origin of your human existence.

Likewise, do not doubt for an instant the *reality* of the method by which God is reproducing after *His* kind, enlarging His Divine family.

When you see two young married women, one of whom is pregnant by two days, what is the difference? Absolutely no difference, to the human eye. Yet, an *enormous* difference in reality—correct? Surely. The young wife who is expecting may not even be aware of the fact as yet; but as surely as the turning of the earth, a *new human life—never having previously existed-- absolutely UNIQUE*, is being formed in her womb. So the pregnant young woman, while outwardly appearing the same, is actually *host* to an unseen, tiny LIFE that is within her. Is that life real? Does it actually exist? Does it have any existence *apart* from the mother?

By the same token, the new *spiritual* life begotten within each repentant sinner—the "new creature in Christ"—is just as *real* as any human embryo, and, like such embryo, has no separate existence, independent of the human spirit, connected to the human mind.

When we receive the Spirit of God following repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17; 9:17), something happens. We are then said to be "begotten of God"! What you have probably never realized is the fact that a wholly *new creature*, now configured according to its *Divine* Father, not its human father, has been *begotten* within your mind!

Paul put it this way: "Because the carnal [fleshly, physical] mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

"So then they that are 'in the flesh' cannot please God. But ye [you converted Christians] are NOT 'in the flesh,' but IN THE SPIRIT, if so be that the Spirit of *God dwell in you!* Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is *none of His*" (Romans 8:7-8). He wrote to the Ephesians, "...the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off 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 [according to; in like fashion] God is *created* [the "new man" is *created* within us!] in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:21-24).

God's Holy Spirit does not unite with flesh! His Spirit does not come into our elbow, or our kneecap, or our shoulder. It enters our *mind*, where dwells, in direct connection with our human brain, our *human spirit!*

Job said, "But there is a *spirit* in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). Paul was inspired to write, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [Greek: *huiiothesia*, meaning "sonship"], whereby we cry 'Abba,' Father. The Spirit itself *beareth witness with OUR SPIRIT*, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16).

The human spirit is that spiritual essence most people have erroneously called "the soul," thinking it is *immortal*, has separate intelligence, and lives on after death. Not so. The human spirit has *no life apart from its connection to the brain*. It is this human spirit that makes us "human," and no mere animal; that lifts us above all other creatures, capable of experiencing compassion, sorrow; becoming conscience-stricken. This human spirit is what gives us our "humanity"!

Just as your human life started by the uniting of *two distinctly separate life cells*, male and female, so the "new creature in Christ" is formed by the union of the Holy Spirit of God with our human spirit.

The frontal lobes of your brain contain that portion of your mind wherein dwells your *personality*, your volition, your decision-making capacity, your will power. The Bible often speaks of this portion of our mind as our "heart," as a reference to that part of our mind which is capable of emotion, of feeling, of contrition, introspection, and decision-making.

What happens when you repent?

You have repented, not with the portion of your brain that controls your physical coordination, your memory, your speech, your eyesight, or any other function except that of your *conscience*; your ability to feel shame and *remorse!* You are said to have experienced "a change of heart." We know there are "good-hearted" people, and people who have "bad hearts," meaning wrong attitudes of resentment and vindictiveness.

When that human spirit is made *willing* through repentance and baptism, God will then implant *His Divine Spirit* which contains a portion of *His LIFE and His NATURE* as surely as our physical father implanted his life and his nature into the egg of our mother to form *OUR LIFE!*

Notice! "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be *partakers of the Divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through wrath" (2 Peter 1:4).

As surely as you inherited your father's very *nature* by His having *engendered* you—so we become partakers of the Divine character and nature by being begotten of our *Heavenly Father!*

Notice again! "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead *dwell in you*, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make spiritually alive] your mortal bodies *by His Spirit that dwelleth in you*" (Romans 8: 11).

What is a begettal? When *you* were begotten by your father imparting *his* life, his nature and physiognomy to *you*, that is precisely when *YOU* began! From the moment of your begettal, you existed; you were

undergoing a dramatic period of fantastic growth and development until you would be *born* from your mother, emerging as a totally unique, separate, never-before, never-to-be-again human being! Yet, you were made in the *image* of your father and mother.

And when we are *begotten* of God's Holy Spirit, we begin a period of *growth* in the (by analogy) "womb" of the *church*, which is called "Jerusalem which is above ... the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26); a period of growth through trial and test, Bible study and prayer, fasting and meditation—overcoming the lusts of our carnal human *nature*, *resisting* the clever enticements of Satan's evil world, until we are a mature "*new creature in Christ*," ready to be *born* of God!

Begetting with God's Holy Spirit is the beginning of a new *spirit being*, a yet-to-be-born *member of God's own Family*, which, when it comes to the time of *birth*, is to be *born of God*! When you were born of your parents, what did you become? Human! You were not placed in a little house behind the house; not placed outdoors—but became a *member of your family*, to be nurtured, loved, and cared for. You were born on the *same level* of humanity as your parents.

When we are *born of God*, what will we *become*? Can you accept it? Can you grasp it? We are to be *born of God*!

What it Really Means to be "Born Again"

At the beginning of this booklet, you read what Jesus said to Nicodemus about being "born again." Now, *what* is born? When one is finally *born* of God by a resurrection, or by being *instantaneously changed* if yet alive, *what kind of creature emerges*?

Notice: "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 [made alive] 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" (1 Corinthians 15:35-38).

Take a tiny radish seed, a grain of corn, and a kernel of wheat. Slice them into smaller pieces with a razor. Look at each under a powerful microscope. Can you learn why, locked within the germ of the kernel of wheat; why, locked within each of the tiny seeds is a pre-ordained pattern which determines what will happen when the seed is planted, portions of it decay, stimulating the germ to put down roots, and begin growing a bulb, or a stalk?

The Bible tells you "God gives it," meaning plants, "a body as it hath pleased Him." Plants are beautiful. They feed and clothe us. God designed them!

Observe a grain of corn. That particular grain of corn never existed before, and if it is planted, most of it will die. That particular grain of corn will never exist again if it is eaten, or even if it is planted, and begins to grow into roots and stalk, finally forming a large, many leafed stalk with perhaps five or six ears of corn—perhaps producing thousands of new grains of corn!

Those new grains of corn never existed before! They are new wealth, produced from the soil. What pattern in the tiny germ locked within the grain of corn caused the roots to pick out those particular minerals and vitamins; those particular nutrients which would give each stalk and each leaf, each ear and every new grain within it its color, fiber, texture, smell and taste? When you look at the new ear of corn, you are looking at a

never before, first time, new creation—something which, if you eat it, can become a part of your body!

What difference is there between a single, decaying grain of corn in the soil, and a large, seven-foot tall stalk of corn with many fat, yellow ears in tassel? Is not the difference astonishing? As the old saying goes, "Great oaks from little acorns grow!"

What is the difference between a six-foot, nine-inch line backer on a professional football team and a microscopic zygote in his mother's womb? Is not the difference astonishing?

God says, "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 [stars and planets, as well as spiritual and human]: 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 dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness: it is raised in power:

"It is sown a natural body [physical, fleshly—the normal human form], it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:36-44).

What is the difference between a cancer-ridden, chalky white, emaciated, dead corpse in a coffin, and a brilliantly shining, vibrantly alive, translucent, powerful, SPIRIT BEING; a member of the FAMILY OF GOD ALMIGHTY?

What is the difference between a living spirit being, able to zip around Mars and back in less than a second, and an elderly person hobbling around with a walker, stooped over with arthritis, trembling from old age, pain and weariness, with poor eyesight, nearly deaf. An incalculable difference, isn't it?

Can you comprehend it? Can you grasp the astonishing truth of God from your own Bible that what is to be BORN OF GOD is a MEMBER OF HIS DIVINE FAMILY, a new creation of the spirit world, destined to inherit the very power of God—possessing never-ending, eternal life?

God is a FAMILY

The first words of the Bible are "In the beginning God..." (Genesis 1: 1). The Hebrew word for our English word "God" is *Elohim*, which is a plural word, connoting more than one Person (see Genesis 2:26).

That God uses the *family* as an analogy to express His great and mysterious truths to us is no accident. It is not the clever artifice of some religious teacher, but God Himself Who calls Himself "Father," Who refers to Jesus Christ as His *Son*, and Who calls we human beings "brethren. "

Look at a few analogies for a moment: God is the Father, Christ is the Firstborn of Mary, the *Son* of God, and the Firstborn from the dead (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:23). He is also Firstborn among *many brethren*.

The saints, converted members of God's true church, are called "brothers and sisters" in Christ. The church is called "Jerusalem above, the 'mother' of us all." The church is pictured as a *woman* who delivered a man child, who was persecuted by Satan (Revelation 12). Christ is pictured as a Bridegroom, and the church as His

bride. His return, and the spiritual *birth* of the church is pictured as a great *wedding* supper (Matthew 25:1-13; Revelation 19:7-9).

These *family* references are God's doing, and that of no man. Millions of professing Christians are *blinded* to the fabulous truth that creation was *not finished* in the Garden of Eden—only *begun!* That God then produced merely a *physical prototype*; that His plan involves the RE-CREATION OF THE GOD FAMILY—GOD REPRODUCING AFTER HIS OWN KIND?

When Christ plainly said He was *very God* in the flesh, the religious leaders of His day said He was guilty of *blasphemy!* Read it! "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath [their man-made traditions, not God's Sabbath], but said also that God was His Father, *making Himself EQUAL WITH GOD*" (John 5:17-18).

But Christ WAS VERY GOD! "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word [Greek: *Logos*, or Spokesman] *was God*" (John 1: 1).

When Christ walked through solid rock following His resurrection, He was able once again to *dematerialize*, to live and move in the *spirit world*. The stone was not rolled away to let Christ *out* of the tomb near Golgotha, but to let the world look *in!* Christ appeared inside rooms, behind locked doors, suddenly *materializing* before His disciples.

Once again, He was Divine, not any longer flesh and blood, but *spirit!* However, even as He materialized before Abraham (Genesis 18), He appeared before His disciples having the same human form, complete with the terrible wounds of His beating and crucifixion (John 20:24-31).

Later, His disciples saw Him miraculously ascending to heaven, being slowly assumed into the clouds (Acts 1: 10-11).

Now, Christ was *born of God* by the resurrection—CHANGED from human to Divine; from flesh to Spirit! He is called "...the first-born among *many brethren*" (Romans 8:29). When we are finally *born* of God, we shall become a part of that same Divine FAMILY; *brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, children of the same Father, members of HIS FAMILY!*

Christ was not blaspheming when He "made Himself equal with God," for He said, "I and my Father are One," showing their togetherness, their sameness. They are *One Spirit Family* of Divine Beings, Each clearly identified in specific role, or rank; God the Father *SUPREME*, Christ the Son, *equal* with His Father in everything, yet subordinate to Him.

Now, let's understand how a spiritual begetting is *real*; how, once the "new creature in Christ" is begotten, it must finally come to full *term* and be *born* of God.

Why Abortion is Murder

When did you begin? Why, at conception, of course. As we have seen, our human lives commenced at the precise instant we were *conceived* by our parents. From that *instant* forward, you, with your color, texture of skin, general physiognomy, color and kind of hair, color of eyes, ultimate height and build—even inherited characteristics from maternal and paternal *grandparents*, were beginning to form in your mother's womb.

In several instances in the Bible, God reveals *He foreknew* certain ones, like Jeremiah, and John the Baptist. That means God, by a miracle, caused their births—that their ultimate destiny was predetermined as early as *conception*.

Now, think seriously. "*When did Christ become CHRIST? Why, at the precise instant of conception! From the moment Christ "emptied Himself" (Philippians 2:7, margin) and by the power of the Holy Spirit became a tiny, microscopic human zygote in Mary's womb, He was a separate, never before in history, distinctly unique human being; GOD IN THE FLESH, Human, yet DIVINE!*"

You and I began *at conception*, not six weeks later, or when we reached the point that we might be able to survive apart from the womb, even though only six or seven months in development.

All attempts to equate the gradual fetal development with chickens, rabbits and other animals merely shows all had the same Great *Designer*, but do not present cogent arguments for evolution. We are, though we may pass through stages which *appear like* some animal, **TOTALLY HUMAN** at conception!

Now, look at the obvious truth of our *spiritual conception!*

When we are *begotten of God* a first time, never before, absolutely unique *spirit being* has been conceived. This tender little life is supposed to be carefully *protected* by the spiritual "womb" of the church! It must **GROW** to maturity. Paul wrote, "And He gave some, apostles: and some, prophets: and some, evangelists: and some, pastors and teachers:

"For the *perfecting* of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [building up; constructing] of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect* [*Greek: teleios*, meaning "mature"] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children ... but speaking the truth in love may *grow up* into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-15).

A little later, Paul wrote, "...put off concerning the former conversation [conduct; way of life] the *old man* [our carnal minds], which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be *renewed in* the SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND [*a new creation!*]; and that ye put on the new man, which after God [from, or according to God] is **CREATED** [*a new created being in Christ*] in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:21-24).

If any person turns back, gives up and quits, **REJECTS** God's truth and God's *rule* in his life after once repenting, being baptized, and receiving God's Spirit, it is the same as a *spiritual abortion!* But with an important difference! An aborted human fetus is dead—gone. Very likely, it will *never be resurrected*. Is God going to provide human *wombs* into which He will place the millions of tiny zygotes and fetuses being aborted each year?

But when a *new creature in Christ* is spiritually "aborted," meaning the carnal nature succeeds in *overcoming* the little, tender, beginning *spiritual* creature, there is only the *second death* awaiting in **GEHENNA FIRE!**

Peter wrote, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and *overcome* [overwhelmed, conquered], the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

"But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and

the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire' " (2 Peter 2:18-22).

Now, think of the analogy of a young wife who finds she is pregnant, and instantly decides to avoid *all toxins* of all kinds, all alcohol, and all harmful substances. She is a wise, loving, *caring* young mother-to-be, for she knows that if she smokes, drinks, uses drugs, or even breathes a lot of "second-hand" smoke, she will pass on all these harmful addictive substances to her baby!

If she also wisely chooses to eat a balanced, healthy diet of plenty of fruits, whole grains, vegetables; drink lots of milk for calcium, avoid too many sweets, starches, sugars and artificial sweeteners, flavors, preservatives and the like, she will be a very *wise* young mother, indeed.

But what if she does none of these things?

Today, helpless little infants are being brought into this world who are already *addicted to drugs!* Many are diseased, malformed, mentally deficient! What kind of a mother would casually imbibe alcohol, smoke cigarettes, eat fatty foods, or artificial soft drinks laden with artificial colorings and flavor, preservatives, and caffeine? *Millions do!*

As a result, our peoples are afflicted with an enormous number of tragically malformed, deficient babies; some born with *drug withdrawal* symptoms.

Will God allow you, as the physical prototype in whom a "new creature in Christ" is to be formed, to *pollute* this new creature with assorted, continual sins?

Paul wrote, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

"And such were some of you: but ye are *washed* [by baptism, and the "washing of water by the Word"—Bible study], but ye are *sanctified* [set apart for *holy* use and purpose], but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

It has been said, "You are what you eat." In like fashion, your mind is composed of what you take into your mind, as surely as a computer is programmed; information inserted into a machine. You are what you *think*; what you hear, see, read, feel, experience—the sum total of all your *mental* input.

Which person among us is unaware of the ghoulish, foul, rotten, satanic influence of "horror" movies, "splatter" movies; motion pictures and video tapes which portray endless explosions, car wrecks, machine-gunnings, garrottings, stabbings, rapes, bludgeonings, slashings—every conceivable method of bloody *murder*?

Millions rush to theaters, or rent video tapes to take home, or tune in to one of the movie channels on TV, and drink in of this virulent filth, just like swilling PURE POISON—polluting their minds and consciences!

Make no mistake! Your mind is just like a computer. Once you *enter data into the "memory" disk in your computer—it is IN there!* By the same token, once you *put something into your mind*, it is IN there. There, it *stays*. As surely as bad food becomes a *part* of you, so bad scenes, bad words, bad moods and attitudes, resentments, hatreds, jealousies, animosities; vicarious sexual experiences, murders—become a *part of your mind*.

Will God allow a converted member of His church, one in whom the developing "new creature in Christ" resides, to wallow in filth, continually imbibing *pollution*, to finally be BORN OF GOD?

There will be no malformed, no missing limbs, no deficient minds, no "thalidomide babies" in God's

Kingdom!

Therefore if we, as the vessels in whom future members of God's own Family are being formed, should carelessly befoul those new creatures, God will *reject* us—we shall never come to full term; never enter into His Kingdom!

The Old Man and the New Man

Notice how Paul was inspired to reveal this concept of inner conflict; the downward tug of human appetites and passions struggling with the upward pull of God's Spirit with our human spirit:

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I [the "old man," the fleshly human being] am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). Paul was by no means denying His baptism and conversion. Continually, he referred to the shocking vision he experienced on the road to Damascus; to the fact of his deep conversion (Acts 26:1-28). He is not rejecting his spirituality here; not denying he has traveled far down the road toward God's Kingdom. No, he is comparing the outward "old man" of whom he wrote so often with the "new creature" in Christ!

In order to better understand this rich, encouraging passage, let's think about ourselves. We say, "This is my hand," or "This is my leg." But when someone has lost an arm, or a leg, *he* is still there. Helpless human beings have lost *both* arms and *both* legs, yet live. What has been lost? Parts of the physical body. But the *person* with his whole store of knowledge, his will and volition, his innermost psyche, his personality—the human individual is still there.

Now, in order to drink in of the whole meaning of Paul's comforting words, let's continue with a close paraphrase of what he so wisely wrote: "For that which I, the fleshly human being, do, I, the new man in Christ, wish I wouldn't do, because the things the new man in Christ really *wants* to do, the carnal human being seems not to accomplish. What I, the innermost converted me, actually *hates*, that I, the fleshly human, seem to do.

"If then I do that which I wish I wouldn't, I consent unto the law that it is good.

"Now then it is no more I, the new creature in Christ, that do it, but *sin* that dwells in my human, physical nature! For I know that in me, (that is, *in my flesh*), dwells no good thing: for to will [to want to; to desire to] is present with me, but how to do those good things I fail to find. For the good that I, the new creature in Christ, would do, I, the carnal human nature, do not; but the evil I wish I wouldn't do—I find myself doing.

"Now if I do that which I would not, it is no more I [the new creature in Christ; Paul, the converted man with God's Holy Spirit added to His human spirit, *changing* his human nature] that do it, but *sin that dwelleth* in me.

"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

"For I delight in the law of God after the *inward man* [the new creature in Christ]: but I see another law in my members [note the personal pronouns!], warring against the law of my mind [God's laws, written in his heart through God's Spirit: Hebrews 8: 10], and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members [his physical body, with its appetites].

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then *with the mind* [the inner, new creature in Christ] I myself *serve the law of God*; but with the flesh [the physical human being with its carnal appetites] the law of sin" (Romans 7:14-25).

What comforting words!

How many times have we felt God is so disgusted with us He will *never hear our prayers again*? How many times have we cried tears of repentance, only to have the *same temptations* overwhelm us again?

Paul fought the same fight. God inspired Him to show us how there is a *struggle* between the two natures: the human, carnal being we are, and the new creature in Christ, striving to *overcome* our carnal human natures, to be more like Christ!

Perhaps now we can understand more fully some of the truly deep things in Paul's writings, things "hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:16). For example, did Paul have an "out of the body experience?" Let's see:

Did the Apostle Paul Have an "Out of the Body" Experience?

Driven to distraction by accusers and critics, Paul continually found himself defending his motives, his conversion, his apostleship—not merely before the Greek philosophers and other pagans—but *to the membership of the church!*

Read the three chapters of 2 Corinthians 10, 11, and 12. To truly understand chapter 12, you need to read up to this mysterious passage, understanding its context. Paul wrote, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell: or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

"And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up to paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

"Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities" (2 Corinthians 12:2-5)

The Holy Spirit inspired these words! It is obvious Paul was writing about himself, for why would he "glory" one way or the other if this were some other person?

Here are the facts:

1) Paul was inspired to write he was "caught up to paradise. " That is the truth of God, inspired of His Spirit. He really was "caught up to paradise, " in one dimension or another.

2) Was he caught up as a fleshly human being; the person, Paul of Tarsus—caught up by the power of God, to view heaven? Paul said he honestly DID NOT KNOW. And if Paul did not know, then you and I cannot know. The method of his being briefly transported to the "third heaven" is known only to God.

3) Instead of being caught up bodily, did he have an "out of the body experience"? Did the "new creature in Christ" within Paul's mind, the creature which is to be born of God by a resurrection in the future, LEAVE Paul's body? Was that new creature caught up to heaven? Paul was inspired to write that he honestly did not know.

We are left with the FACT that Paul was caught up! This much, we know, and cannot deny!

We are left with the FACT that Paul did not know whether it was bodily, or an out of the body experience! Therefore, IT COULD HAVE BEEN EITHER!

Certainly, God's Holy Spirit did not inspire this passage lightly! It is in the Word of God for a very important reason—to remind us of the future life we shall have in the spirit world no longer as a flesh and blood, air breathing, water drinking, food eating human, but as a member of the Divine Family of God!

When Paul said, "Of such an one will I glory," he was saying, "There is nothing about my flesh, this physical life, which leads me to exult, to rejoice, to passionately embrace emotionally! But as a SPIRIT BEING? Yes! Then, let me passionately exult, rejoice, leap, dance, sing, praise God as did David before the Ark of the Covenant; GLORY in such a state of being, such a vision! "

Clearly, he was contrasting the vainglory of pompous religious leaders who rejoiced over circumcision and the like, with a vision of God's Kingdom; God's Family, which is great cause for glorying, for praise, and grateful thanksgiving!

Did Paul have an "out of the body experience"? Even Paul did not know, and therefore, we cannot know. One thing is sure. He was, either bodily, or the new creature in Christ out of the body, "caught up" to the third heaven for some moments, as a foretaste of that great event of which he wrote, "... 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" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

How God's Martyrs Overcame Fear

Now, we can understand what Jesus meant when He said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul [*Greek: psuche*, meaning "life"]: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy BOTH soul and body in Gehenna" (Matthew 10:28). Those who heard Jesus' words knew immediately what He meant by "Gehenna," for He referred to the Valley of the sons of Hinnom, which was called "Geena, " or "Gehenna." It was the town dump—a narrow valley below a precipitous cliff where trash, garbage, dead animals, and even the bodies of criminals who were put to death were thrown. Fed by perpetual fires, this ancient dump site, with its flames and perennial smoke, was used by Jesus Christ as analogous to the "Gehenna fire" which God will use to destroy the wicked; eventually, to totally change the character of our watery planet (2 Peter 3:10-13).

The Greek words used by Matthew were *psuche* (translated "soul"), and *soma*, which means "body. " The word *psuche* has no etymological relationship to anything spiritual, of the spirit, extra-physical, or immortal, but refers to the physical, chemical existence of all animal life. It should have been rendered merely, "life," for clearer understanding.

I know people who have lost limbs. They might say, "I lost my arm in an accident," or, "I lost my leg. " But the "I" doing the speaking is *complete*. Same mind, same personality, same memory, same hopes and dreams, same conscience—the same *person*. What if someone had lost all four limbs, both eyes, one lung, and had had both a liver and a heart transplant? As grotesque as this picture might be, the point is clear—that *person* is still there; for our physical lives *and* the "new creature in Christ" abide together *in the mind*. One is physical life—the human brain, energized by oxygen, and the blood supply. The other is *spiritual life*—the "new creature in Christ," composed of the unity between our human spirit and the Holy Spirit of God, which begets a "new creature."

Christ plainly said that we need not fear man, who, though he has the power to destroy this human body, can have no power over the new spiritual creature begotten of God.

The traditional concept of the "immortality of the soul" misses the mark widely. The Bible teaches no such doctrine—the words "immortal soul" appear nowhere in Scripture. However, the Bible does show that each human being possesses the *human spirit*, or the "spirit in man," if you prefer. That spiritual essence is linked directly to the brain, and has *no consciousness; no life apart from it*.

The Bible speaks of the dead as oblivious, unconscious: "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.

"Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" (Psalm 49:11-12). God says, "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: *as the one dieth, so dieth the other...*" The death of a cow, horse, or dog is identical to the death of a human. There is no difference. They are *the same*. "...yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast ... all go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20).

There is *no consciousness* in death—no more thought, reason, awareness—only the blackest oblivion, like the deepest possible sleep! "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day *his thoughts perish*" (Psalm 146:3-4).

God says His people need not fear death. The fear of death; superstitions and fables connected with death (like an ever-burning hell, and other bizarre punishments), has resulted in weird pagan practices, including infant sacrifice.

God says, "...He [Christ] also Himself likewise took part of the same [human mortality]; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and deliver them who *through fear of death* were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

To most, death is an abhorrent, yawning black pit; a terrible, fearful, hated thing—something to be put off, avoided at all cost. But "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). Jesus said *not to fear* man who can only kill the body, but *cannot destroy the human spirit; cannot terminate the "new creature in Christ," which has a spiritual existence*.

Once God has *begotten* a "new creature in Christ" in our minds, He says we should be "...confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." Paul wrote, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have *fought a good fight*, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Paul said, "Let your conversation [conduct] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' so that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me'" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

What tremendous *peace of mind* can be ours when we *know we are saved*; know a new creature in Christ is begotten within us; know that the *innermost* person we are **SHALL NEVER DIE!** As Paul wrote, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*, who walk [live] not after [according to] the flesh, but after the Spirit!" (Romans 8: 1).

With such confidence, Christians have faced swords, spears, fire, raging lions, torture racks, and firing squads! A Christian can look death in the face and say, "You have no power over me! Oh, you can kill this *body*; you can destroy my flesh, but **YOU CANNOT KILL ME!**" Our lives are "hid with Christ in God." We are not any longer susceptible to the "fear of death" which results in great evil, but possess the *love* of God, which cancels fear!

Some professing Christian teachers keep their members continually in *fear*. Threats of "losing out," of being "left behind," of being thrown into a lake of fire, of being "put out" of the church are used by unprincipled men who seek only *control* over their followers' lives. But our confidence in Christ is not susceptible to fear, doubt, insecurity—constant uncertainty about our spiritual state.

God says, "And this is the record, that God HATH GIVEN [past tense!] to us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son*. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." The moment one becomes completely repentant, is baptized, and receives God's Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands (Acts 2:38; 5:32; 9:17), a *new creature in Christ* is begotten! Though there is *no consciousness* apart from its connection to the human brain through the human spirit; no separate existence any more than a human fetus has separate existence from its mothers' womb, this spiritual life *does exist*. It is *real*. It has been begotten, and, if brought to full term through a lifetime of overcoming, Bible study, prayer, church fellowship; *growing* in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, it shall come to the birth—finally be born into the God Family!

Why did John write such comforting words? He said, "These things have I written to unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye *have eternal life*, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:11-13).

This wonderful knowledge—this confidence that "that good work that has begun in us" is real; that we already possess *citizenship with God* (Philippians 2:20; margin)—helps us to be able to stare physical death in the face *without fear*. No man has power over that new creature in Christ! Only *God* can destroy it!

What is your confidence? Why, that Satan *cannot* overthrow you; God will not; man *cannot* destroy your spiritual life—only *you* can make the daily choices, and the final decisions affecting eternal life.

Living in Temporary Houses

Now we can understand the deep significance of God's annual Festival of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34-44). For many decades, God's people were taught that the Feast of Tabernacles was like a foretaste of the Kingdom of God, that it was a picture of the government of God on earth, the Millennium.

So far as it went, this picture was not erroneous—only incomplete. Not understood was the true significance of the "new creature in Christ" that is to be begotten within each Christian, and how these newly—begotten children of God form a rich tapestry of meaning with the typology of the Israelites' 40 years of wandering.

Notice what God says about the feast: "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths [tabernacles; tents, temporary dwelling-places]: *that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths*, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Eternal your God."

Except you look elsewhere in biblical typology, search the Scriptures for the meaning of all the annual Sabbaths, and see them in their whole perspective, you would be left with: "I want you to live in booths, to picture the fact that I made you live in booths." For the *only explanation* in the original chapter setting forth the Feast of Tabernacles is that you just read!

Now, *why* did God make them sojourn for forty years in temporary dwelling places?

Look at the typology: Egypt was a type of sin. Pharaoh was a symbol of Satan; the two magicians, Jannes and Jambres, types of the "beast" and "false prophet." Individual Israelites were pictured as slaves to sin; Israel as a nation a type of the church, while Moses is seen in two shadowy types, both as God the Father (in his

relationship with Israel, and in the giving of the law), and as Christ (as the intermediary between the people and God).

The Red Sea typified baptism (1 Corinthians 10: 1-4); the pursuing armies of Pharaoh pictured Satan's world, and Satan himself, striving to hold on to each person who escapes from sin, repents, is baptized, and receives God's Holy Spirit.

The wilderness of sin pictures this human life span, living in Satan's world (Revelation 12:9; 11 Corinthians 4:4), enduring trials and temptations. The forty years symbolize testing, trials.

The promised land pictured the Kingdom of God; the Jordan River the final crossing; death of the old, birth of the new.

The entire generation that came out of Egypt perished in the wilderness. Only their children, those born *during their parents' wanderings*, entered the promised land under Joshua, who is a type of Christ. The Hebrew "Joshua" is a direct synonym with "Jesus. "

The older generation pictures our human, physical bodies, formerly enslaved to sin, under Satan's sway, giving in to the temptations of Egypt. The newer generation who crossed Jordan under Joshua pictures the "new creature in Christ," coming *out of the older generation*, crossing Jordan (rebirth, or the resurrection), and entering into the Kingdom of God!

Notice the obvious picture painted by Paul: "But we have this treasure [salvation, "Christ in us, the hope of glory"] in *earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Here, Paul likens our physical bodies to clay pots, showing their temporality, but the eternal nature of the "treasure" of the spirit.

Read up to the end of this chapter for a fuller understanding of 2 Corinthians 5. Paul wrote "...we faint not; but though our outward man perish [our human bodies age, and finally die], yet the inward man [the new creature in Christ] is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. " Here, men placed a chapter break. But the theme continues with 1 Corinthians 5, verse 1: "For we know that if our earthly *house of this tabernacle* were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1).

Paul likens our physical bodies to "tabernacles," booths, tents, or little shelters made from branches of trees and palm fronds. Reference to the Feast of Tabernacles is unmistakable.

Now, study carefully each word of the remainder of this passage in the light of what you have learned: "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: [our permanent spiritual body]. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked [exposed as a result of sin—not possessing a permanent spiritual home]. For we that are *in this tabernacle* [our physical bodies] do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Corinthians 5:1-4).

Paul's references to "groaning" refers to the yearnings of the spirit; the impossible-to-be-articulated desire of the new creature in Christ to finally achieve birth into God's Kingdom. Notice, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption ["sonship"], whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with *our spirit* that we are the children of God ... likewise the Spirit also

helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

"And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:16-27).

Even as Paul heard words which "cannot be uttered" during his brief view of the third heaven, so he likens our innermost yearnings for God's Kingdom; our agonies of striving against sin, to "groanings which cannot be uttered," saying God's Holy Spirit intercedes that God knows our hearts and innermost being; that God searches the "mind of the Spirit."

Paul continued, "Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest [like a down payment, or token] of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we [the new creature in Christ] are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body [the new creature in Christ finally *liberated from*; separate from, these physical bodies], and to be present with the Lord.

"Wherefore we labor, that, whether present [in our physical bodies] or absent [no longer in our physical bodies], we may be accepted of Him.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:5-10).

Now notice the climactic truth God reveals through Paul, "Wherefore henceforth know we *no man after the flesh* [we no longer judge according to physical appearances; according to the vain socioeconomic standards of Satan's evil world]: yea though we have known Christ after the flesh [we saw Him as a physical human being; beheld His physical body], yet now henceforth know we Him no more [physically].

"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 5:16-17).

The Greek word for "creature" is *ktisis*, and means "original formation—building, creation, creature..." It is interchangeable with the word "creation" in English.

How *plain* is God's truth to those who have had their minds opened by His Spirit! Not only does the Feast of Tabernacles *look forward* to the reign of Christ on this earth for 1,000 years, it also looks into the *present*; *pictures our sojourn* during a physical lifetime in temporary "tabernacles," enduring trials and testing, looking forward to the typical river Jordan; crossing over into the promised land, which is death and resurrection, or an instantaneous *change at Christ's coming!*

Have You Been Convinced?

I have known many people who have accepted various points of truth; studied their Bibles diligently, comparing scripture with scripture, to finally *agree* concerning this or that doctrine.

They then *accepted* this new doctrinal point, convinced it was true.

What about you? Are you a "believer"? That is, do you have certain "belief" which you hold to be true; beliefs you accept as God's Word; beliefs which form your philosophical and doctrinal underpinnings—that make you what you *are*, religiously?

I want you to take *serious warning* at this point; to *think* deeply about what you are to read!

Everything you have learned in the preceding pages is the truth of God from the pages of your own Bible. It is *dangerous* knowledge in a sense, for it requires *action* on your part—either to accept it, and believe, or reject it, spurning God's truth. However, *even to merely accept it is not enough!*

Here's why!

The "new creature in Christ" of which you have been reading is REAL. It is not a figment of imagination. It is as real as you are real. And it is *only those who have repented of sin*; who knew *what sin is* when they repented; knew what to repent of, who underwent water baptism, and who received God's Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands who have had a "new creature in Christ" actually begotten within them!

Being a Christian is NOT MERELY AN ATTITUDE OF MIND!

Remember what we learned about Satan and demons, and "belief"?

Satan is a *believer!* Do you think his *belief* makes him a Christian?

Many professing Christians have come to "see" a doctrinal argument here and there, have "accepted" some point of truth or other. In their goodness, since they are the kind of people (they pridefully assume) who always "accept truth" when they see it, they *agree* with "truth" when it is revealed to them. They add another doctrine to their store of "beliefs."

But such people have never experienced bitter, soul-shattering, emotional BREAKUP over SIN! They have never truly REPENTED!

And, unless we REPENT, and do so with the whole mind, with unreserved emotion of self-revulsion and disgust; do so with joyous acceptance of Christ and His sacrifice—unless we do exactly as Peter said in Acts 2:38—then *no "new creature in Christ" has been begotten within us!*

That would be precisely like a young married women *thinking she* is pregnant, *expecting* a son or daughter, only to find she was *not pregnant in the first place*—no child is forthcoming! You did not get here because your mother "thought" she was going to have a child!

And you will never enter the Kingdom of God because you "think" a certain way; accept certain points of truth, or are convinced of an argument!

Just as surely as you cannot "imagine" electricity into your home, you cannot "imagine" your way into God's Kingdom! Being *born of God is not a mind-set!*

As shocking as it may sound, there will be MANY who will be inducted into God's Kingdom who will have had little opportunity to learn very much about biblical history, about prophecy, about doctrine! Christ said the "first shall be last" and the "last shall be first." There is coming a time when millions will repent when they see the awesome power of God in gigantic, globe-shattering display, during the GREAT TRIBULATION, and the coming Day of the Lord! Out of this climactic time will come not only the 144,000 of Revelation 7, but a vast, *countless multitude* as well!

None of these will have gradually, begrudgingly, reluctantly been dragged along, one intellectual argument after another; accepting one point of truth after another, finally building some systematic liturgy forming a body of "doctrine" which makes up their concept of "Christianity." No, they will have REPENTED, in shocking, soul

shattering attacks of *conscience*; the knowledge of just HOW GREAT is God!

Do you see?

Christ said it best! "...except ye REPENT, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3-5).

Now, let your mind contemplate the moment of your human birth. You cannot remember it, but it happened. A tiny, wet, human form emerged from the body of your mother a certain number of years ago. From those first moments when you began taking your first breath of this earth's air supply through your own lungs, now *separate from* your mother's blood supply, YOU were on your own. Oh, your parents had to nurture, care for you, protect you; feed you, clothe you, clean and wash you. But you were *here*, a certain number of years ago.

You were destined to undergo all life's experiences; learning to walk, to talk; go to school, perhaps marry, and have children of your own—undergo heartache, suffering, joy, happiness, pain, sickness, triumph, tragedy—years of sometimes wonderful, sometimes terrible human *experience*.

Why?

Why Were You Born?

Without attempting to be overly "clinical" in explaining the answer to this ultimate question, let us apply the same question to our father's life-giving male sperm cell prior to our begetting. Why was it created? Why did it exist? What was its purpose?

Pretty obvious, isn't it?

It came into being so WE could come into being, so we could be given these human physical lives! What did we become, once our father's male cell united with our mother's female egg? We became *exactly who we are!* And our human, physical lives began *at conception*, not a moment later!

Though we were then a tiny, microscopic zygote within the womb of our mother, we were nevertheless human; possessing the genetic codes which would give us our entire physiognomy; determine our ultimate height, general build, skin color and texture, color of eyes and hair, tenor of voice, and certain proclivities and talents!

In like manner, when God begets a "new creature in Christ" by the power of *His Holy Spirit*, uniting with *our human spirit*, *WHAT IS BEGOTTEN?*

Does your mind deny it? Do you shy away from the answer? Do you believe it sounds *blasphemous*?

But Paul wrote, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are *the children of God*: and if children, then HEIRS: heirs of God, and *JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST*" (Romans 8:16-17).

What has Christ inherited? At *what level* does Christ exist in His Divine Family?

Christ has inherited ALL THINGS—the *universe*, in all its imagination—defying glory and splendor! He now dwells beside His Father in ETERNAL POWER AND GLORY, and is VERY GOD!

And what shall we finally *become* when we are BORN OF GOD? John said, "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).

The name "God" comes from a *Family term, Elohim*, and means *more than One!* When I was born, I was born an "Armstrong. " You were born, likewise, into your family. And when we are finally *born of God*, that is what we shall BECOME—members of the Divine *FAMILY* of God; lesser than Christ, and subject to Him; yet, members of His own Family! Can you now comprehend? Can you now understand, at last, your astonishing human potential?

No wonder David prayed, "For thou hast formed my reins: thou hast knit me together in my mother's womb.

"I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. "My frame was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, from the day they were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139:13-17).

Why are YOU?

You are here because God Almighty loves you; because He put you *here—produced* you, for a FABULOUS, UNSPEAKABLY GREAT SPIRITUAL PURPOSE! Do not miss your opportunity! Do not waste your human, physical existence which is so brief, which is for the sole purpose of ultimately being made a member of the very Divine Family! Have you repented? Have you been baptized? Have you received God's Holy Spirit? Has a "new creature in Christ" been formed within you by the power of God?

-End-

You may copy and distribute this information only to friends and family without changes, without charge and with full credit given to the author and publisher. You may not publish it for general audiences.

This publication is intended to be used as a personal study tool. Please know it is not wise to take any man's word for anything, so prove all things for yourself from the pages of your own Bible.

The Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association
P.O. Box 747
Flint, TX 75762
Phone: (903) 561-7070 • Fax: (903) 561-4141

More FREE literature is available at our Internet Web Site:

www.garnertedarmstrong.ws

-

The activities of the Garner Ted Armstrong Evangelistic Association are paid for by tithes, offerings and donations freely given by Christians and co-workers who are dedicated to preaching the gospel according to Jesus Christ.

