

Just what do you mean...BORN AGAIN?

By Herbert W Armstrong

Don't be too sure you know! Many professing Christians sincerely believe they have been "born again" - but do not understand what Jesus meant by those words. The true answer is not only surprising - it is startling! - THE MOST IMPORTANT truth you can know, here made SO PLAIN you will UNDERSTAND!

WHY did not the Pharisee, Nicodemus, understand when Jesus said to him: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"?

WHY do people not understand those words today?

HOW MANY know, today, that Jesus' Gospel was a sensational, never-before proclaimed NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT?

Jesus Was a Newscaster

Those in Judea knew - or should have known - Malachi's prophecy concerning this. It was the Gospel of God - and the word "gospel" means GOOD NEWS!

Jesus was a NEWSCASTER. His news was something absolutely NEW - never before proclaimed to mankind. It was the most wonderful NEWS ever reported. Actually almost too wonderful for humans to believe. It was news of the utterly transcendent potential of man.

A humorous columnist wrote a bit on the news printed in daily newspapers. It is actually NOT news, he insisted, since it is a reporting of events that already have happened. Therefore it is no longer NEW, but OLD when printed. He insisted it really ought to be called OLDS!

The tremendous Message that Jesus brought was NEWS! It was not a report of past events. It was ADVANCE news! - news of an almost UTOPIAN WORLD TOMORROW!

And it is SURE!

And it was news that we may be BORN AGAIN! Yet almost nobody understands it!

HOW MANY, even today, know that Jesus' Gospel was NOT in any sense a new or different religion - yet it was actually so BREATHTAKING - so seemingly incredible, so startling, it should have left its hearers in a daze of awe! It didn't. WHY?

WHY has it never been recognized by the world as the stupendous NEWS that it actually was?

Simply because the leaders in Judea rejected it - hated it - hated Jesus for announcing the wonderful great news - turned most of the people against it. And it has been so MISrepresented, so distorted and maligned, that the whole world has been deceived - and has totally MISUNDERSTOOD IT! Your Bible says the WHOLE WORLD - all nations - have been deceived about that Gospel!

The time was at hand, then, for this Message to be announced! The time is at hand, today, for its true MEANING to be made so PLAIN that the people may UNDERSTAND IT!

It WILL BE, in this booklet! And it is a crucial CHALLENGE to you who now read it!

And you have to UNDERSTAND what was that news announcement, or you can never UNDERSTAND what Jesus meant about being "born again."

What Was the News?

Just What Do You Mean ... BORN AGAIN?

Notice, briefly, first, what that astonishing NEW Message was!

The pre-announcement, in Malachi's prophecy, says: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek [the Messiah], shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant ... " (Mal. 3:1).

Now notice the beginning of the Messenger's proclamation of that Message.

It is recorded in Mark's Gospel, chapter 1: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets...." Then follows the citation from Malachi, written above. That is followed by the account of John the Baptist, preparing the way for the Messenger.

Then, verses 14-15: "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of god, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel.'" That is, BELIEVE the Good News!

What IS the Kingdom of God?

What did He mean - the Kingdom of God?

Jesus' whole Message - His Gospel - was about the KINGDOM OF GOD! Yet few know anything about it, today.

A Kingdom is a), a NATION composed of people, and b), the GOVERNMENT of the nation.

In some cases, the people of a nation are the descendants the children - of one man. The nation of Turkey is the descendants of the ancient Esau, twin brother of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, father of the nation Israel. Before the twins were born, God said to their mother, Rebekah, "Two nations are in thy womb ..." (Gen. 25:23).

Now Jesus the Messiah was to come as the "Messenger of the COVENANT." The "Old Covenant" had established the human children of Israel as a NATION or KINGDOM of humans, called the KINGDOM OF ISRAEL. Jesus came as the Messenger - heralding the Message of the NEW Covenant that shall set up the Spirit-composed children of GOD as the Kingdom of God!

As the ancient Kingdom of Israel was composed of the human FAMILY of the human man Israel, so the Kingdom of God will be composed of the divine family of the divine GOD!

And what does this have to do with "being BORN AGAIN"? It has everything to do with it!

Daniel Foretold it

The Prophet Daniel wrote of this Kingdom of God. In his second chapter, after foretelling of the Chaldean Empire (Babylon), the Persian Empire, the Graeco-Macedonian Empire with its four divisions, and the Roman Empire, stretching into the now-forming resurrected "Holy Roman Empire" in Europe, we read the following: "And in the days of these kings [the forthcoming United States of Europe] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed ... but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44). To "stand forever" it will, of necessity, be a Kingdom of IMMORTALS, not mortals.

It will be a WORLD RULING Kingdom!

Daniel's 7th chapter portrays it again - and shows the connection with being "born again". The four world empires - Babylon through Rome and its coming resurrection in Europe - are pictured as four beasts - wild animals.

Saints Become Immortal

Verse 17: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings [kingdoms], which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever." To possess it FOR EVER, the saints have to be IMMORTAL!

Then the Babylonian religious power, now Roman, "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days [Christ at second coming] came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom" (verses 21-22). Read also verse 27.

The second coming of Christ is described thus: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever'" (Rev. 11:15).

Yet in spite of these and many more scriptures, many deceived theologians today mislead the people saying that the CHURCH is the Kingdom of God! Or, that "the Kingdom" is some ethereal nothing "in men's hearts."

Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand."

What did He mean? WHY had this Message never been proclaimed before? The answer requires a pre-history background.

There Was Once PEACE on Earth

It isn't popular, today, to mention the existence of a devil. But the Bible, again and again, puts great emphasis on the presence of a real, literal devil.

Biblical revelation shows that originally, this earth was a place of PEACE, happiness - a real utopia. It was then ruled by the GOVERNMENT OF GOD. That Government will be once again RESTORED (Acts 3:20-21) by Christ returning to earth in the supreme POWER and GLORY of God!

But what happened? WHY don't we have that Government now? Why is there no PEACE on earth?

When the earth was originally created, the angels shouted for JOY! (Job 38:7). It was beautiful. It was PEACEFUL. It was populated by angels - not then by humans. It was governed by the GOVERNMENT OF GOD. There was a super arch-angel - a cherub named Lucifer (meaning bringer of LIGHT) - one of two cherubim whose wings stretched over the very throne of God in heaven. Lucifer was thoroughly trained in the administration of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-17).

God governs by His spiritual Law - a Law based on the principle of LOVE. Love, first, to God with submission and obedience, and secondly to His creatures - the way of outgoing concern for the good and welfare of others. But Lucifer's heart was lifted up in vanity, because of his beauty and vast knowledge. He rebelled against God, mutinied, set out to organize his angels into an invading army and to conquer GOD - in order to rule the entire vast UNIVERSE. This disqualified him as earth's ruler. However, the very principle of God's Government requires that the ruler retains office until a successor qualifies and is inducted into office.

Lucifer's name was changed to Satan, the devil. His angels became demons. As a result of this universal rebellion on earth, universal destruction and chaos struck the surface of the earth. In six days God reshaped the earth's surface (Genesis 1), creating fauna and flora - and MAN!

When Man Appeared

God formed MAN, not after any animal kind, but in God's own likeness - not of spirit composition as is God, but of material flesh and blood. The first man, Adam, father of the human race, allowed Satan's attitude of REBELLION to enter his heart, failing to qualify as Satan's successor.

When Jesus was baptized by John (Mark 1:9-11), immediately He underwent the most titanic struggle ever, in His temptation by the devil (verses 12-13).

Jesus had come to qualify to replace Satan - to restore the Government of God on earth, and bring back WORLD PEACE! But, as the first Adam had undergone and succumbed to Satan's temptation, Jesus had to face and overcome this disqualified Satan.

Jesus underwent this test under the most trying and difficult conditions possible. He had been almost totally depleted of physical strength by fasting 40 days and nights - no food and no water! Yet even in this physical weakness, He was made stronger SPIRITUALLY.

Few have ever realized the stupendous struggle that took place in the crucial temptation. Jesus resisted Satan's supreme temptations. He did it by quoting Scriptures and OBEYING GOD. He proved under the maximum possible test that He would obey God's Laws and administer God's GOVERNMENT faithfully. Then, in utter physical weakness but supreme spiritual strength, He proved He was Satan's Master, by giving Satan a crisp command to leave - and the defeated Satan slunk away!

Then (Mark 1:14), having qualified for the executive administration of the Government of God on Earth, Jesus came into Galilee, saying, as quoted above, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand"! (Verse 15).

WHY the News Was NEW

HOW was the time fulfilled?

WHY was the Kingdom of God then at hand - and not before?

Simply because the wonderful news of the Kingdom of God could not be announced UNTIL a successor had QUALIFIED to replace Satan as Earth's ruler!

At last the Kingdom of God - GOD'S GOVERNMENT over the earth was at hand! At last, it was assured, and the time was fulfilled! The One who had qualified to rule was now free to announce His coming Government!

WHY Kingdom Not Yet Set Up

Yet Jesus was not going to take over the reign immediately. There were a number of reasons:

1. God had set a definite PLAN, with a definite time-program, for working out HIS PURPOSE here below! It is a 7,000-year plan of seven millennial "days", of which the first seven literal days of re-creation were a type. The first six of these millenniums were allotted for man, of his own free volition (though swayed by Satan) to go his own way. Also, in effect, they were allotted as the six millennial "days" for Satan's "labor" of deception over humanity, to be followed by the millennial "Sabbath", in which Satan will observe enforced rest from his work of deceiving the nations, and God will teach humanity His TRUTH!

2. Jesus, in God's PLAN, was first to choose and teach disciples to become apostles, to carry on the proclamation of the GOOD NEWS - and to become the foundation of His Church.
3. Christ is going to set up a world government over all earth's nations only with the administration of a thoroughly trained and experienced organization. The first six thousand years of human experimentation has proved abundantly that man, under Satan's sway, is utterly incapable of ruling himself. Human-devised governments always have failed to bring world PEACE. Yet man, even now, seems unwilling to admit that fact. Men are still trying, in vain, to work and fight for PEACE. And that is where being "born again" comes in. And that, also, is where "born again" has been tragically misunderstood and misrepresented! God's Government will be DIVINE GOVERNMENT, by the saints converted into divine SPIRIT PERSONS, born of GOD! As those born of humans are human beings, so those born of the divine God will be DIVINE BEINGS, having been given IMMORTALITY! They shall be born into - enter into - inherit the KINGDOM OF GOD.

Kingdom Is a Family

A KINGDOM is a nation composed of people, as well as the GOVERNMENT of that nation. The Kingdom of GOD is composed of the divine FAMILY of God. The One Being we habitually think of as GOD is the FATHER of that Family.

Christ is a Son of God - a member of that divine FAMILY, even as we may be!! That divine FAMILY is the Kingdom of God.

There are five KINGDOMS - the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, the human kingdom (we are not of the animal kingdom, erroneous education to the contrary notwithstanding!!), the angel kingdom - and the GOD Kingdom!

God (Heb. Elohim - the uni-plural name, meaning more than one Person, forming the ONE GOD) said, "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness." We were made of material flesh, but in the form and shape of God, and with MINDS on a totally different plane than animal brain. The human family was made so that we might be able to receive God's Spirit, and become His children. Animals were NOT so made.

In God's wonderful Plan for working out His PURPOSE here below, God has allotted the time-period between Jesus' first coming in human flesh, and His second coming in power and GLORY, for the calling of some to receive His Spirit, and be spiritually educated and trained, through His Word, to become rulers with Christ when He sets up His KINGDOM.

The Crux of Salvation

4. In order that man might be reconciled to God, Jesus also came for the express purpose of DEATH, by His shed blood paying for us, in our stead, the death penalty we have incurred as the penalty of sin. In order that we might be given God's gift of ETERNAL LIFE, Jesus' resurrection from the dead was necessary before we could receive eternal life.
5. The PLAN called for Jesus' ascension to God's throne in heaven - the throne of the government of God over the UNIVERSE - to become our High Priest, during these years of training and spiritual development of the heirs of God to be used in the executive administration of the Government of God when Christ does set up that Government over earth's nations.
6. Jesus could not induct Himself into the office while here on earth in human form. It was necessary for Him, as explained in the parable of the pounds (Luke 19), to go to heaven to there receive the authority of the Kingdom from God (the Father) - and to be CROWNED! The coronation

ceremony will take place in heaven at God's throne, before Christ's return in POWER and GLORY!

7. Then He must return in all that POWER AND GLORY and supreme authority to RULE!

Those are the reasons why Jesus did not then, immediately, set up or establish the Kingdom of God!

But even Jesus' own disciples could never seem to understand that He was not going to set up the Kingdom of God immediately. It is human to want things NOW!

WHY Jewish Rulers Hated Message

The Jewish rulers of Jesus' day, also, thought He was proclaiming a government to be set up immediately - to overthrow the Roman Empire, then ruling Judea as a vassal state.

One of these rulers of the Jews was a man named Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee, and the Pharisees were hostile to Jesus, because of this new Gospel. Nicodemus, however, wanted to meet this astounding Messenger and discuss it with him. To avoid criticism from his colleagues, he came to Jesus by night.

"We know," he said, "that you are a teacher come from God."

The "we" implies that the divine identity of the Messenger and the Source of His Message was known to the Pharisees. But they were "NOW" people, concerned with protecting their status as rulers under the Roman government, not with receiving revelations from God.

Judea was a vassal state, under the rule of the Romans. The Romans were shrewd enough to force leaders among the Jews to administer most of the details of government, under higher Roman officials. Of course, the Roman rule was protected by occupying military forces. This system made life for the Jewish sub-rulers very desirable - a status worth maintaining.

At once Jesus perceived the import of Nicodemus' first words. His Message was the good news of the coming WORLD GOVERNMENT of GOD - that is, the KINGDOM OF GOD - the GOVERNMENT of God. These Jewish rulers feared that Message. Jesus was of their race - a Jew. If they did not oppose Him, they feared being shorn of their power, and perhaps put to death as subversives threatening the overthrow of the Roman government. And the Pharisees thought Jesus proclaimed the immediate takeover of that rule!

Not of This Age

Therefore Jesus did not waste words. He struck straight through to the crux point - the Kingdom of God is not of this world this time - this age - but of the WORLD TOMORROW - a different and a following AGE. Not composed of humans, but of immortals - the GOD FAMILY!

So Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

Notice carefully, please - being "born again" has a vital connection with the Kingdom of God - with THE FACT that it is not of this time - this age. And - I repeat - Jesus' Gospel - His Message - was the Kingdom of God.

But Jesus' abrupt opening statement left Nicodemus confused. The religious leaders, and the hundreds of denominations and sects professing Christianity today are confused and deceived! Today's religionists put a different twist on it than did Nicodemus, however.

Nicodemus did understand clearly what is meant by being born. He knew it meant being delivered from his mother's womb. It meant being delivered into the WORLD! Today's religious leaders read into it a different meaning! What Nicodemus could not understand was how - in what manner - anyone could be

born AGAIN! And of course, being carnal-minded, he could only conceive of a second physical birth. But he knew what being born meant!

Born Human a Second Time?

Puzzled, he asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" He was not confused about what is meant by being BORN. What Nicodemus could not understand was a second birth. He thought that Jesus was talking about a second human birth.

He was unable to conceive of any but a second physical birth his mind could not grasp spiritual things. Now Jesus had made clear that the Kingdom of God is something that can be seen - but not until or UNLESS one is "born again." Not during this physical lifetime! Also, verse 5, the Kingdom of God is something a man may enter into - but not until after he is born AGAIN - another and entirely different birth.

Then Jesus came quickly to the point - that the Kingdom of God is not of this present human LIFE in this present WORLD it is not of this TIME - this present life-TIME - or age - it is the succeeding age - and the life to come.

Here is the crux point that explains it all: Jesus said: "That which is born of the flesh IS flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit IS spirit."

Man is now flesh - human. He is MATERIAL SUBSTANCE. "Dust thou art," God said to Adam, "and unto dust thou shalt thou return." Again, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 3:19 and 2:7).

Those Born Again to BE Spirit

But, said Jesus plainly, when one is born of the Spirit HE WILL BE SPIRIT! Look at it! Read it in your own Bible.

The Kingdom of God will be composed of SPIRIT BEINGS - not of humans!

At birth of human flesh, one is delivered from his mother's womb into this world. When born of the Spirit one will be delivered from the CHURCH of God (physical) into the KINGDOM of God (a Kingdom of SPIRIT BEINGS!).

Man is now COMPOSED of flesh - material substance - matter.

When BORN AGAIN he will BE spirit - a SPIRIT BEING, no longer human. He will be COMPOSED of spirit - of spirit composition with life inherent - with self-containing life - not then existing by the breath of air and the circulation of blood.

Of the next age when the Kingdom of God will rule the world the next LIFE - Jesus said "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God ..." (Matt. 22:30). Marriage is a physical, fleshly union. In the age of God's Kingdom - when "born again" - we shall BE spirit, not flesh. Born of God as SPIRIT BEINGS, no longer human. Angels are spirits - composed of spirit (Heb. 1:7). Jesus did not say we shall then be angels - but AS the angels - sexless and composed of SPIRIT. Angels are spirit beings - created as such - but not begotten and BORN of God as God's own born children. We therefore shall be much higher than angels!

Jesus explained this further to Nicodemus

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

You cannot see wind. Wind is compared to spirit. It is INVISIBLE. That's why mortal FLESH, as we now are, cannot SEE the Kingdom of God. Those who inherit it will be spirit - normally invisible to eyes still human.

Energy of an A-Bomb?

Jesus was also comparing the POWER of one born of the Spirit to that of wind. A scientist of the U.S. Weather Bureau, Dr. J. Murray Mitchell, Jr., Research Climatologist, said that the energy of one average hurricane is much greater than an A-bomb such as destroyed Hiroshima. I am certain that no human claiming to have been "born again" in this human life is capable of exerting a tiny fraction of that kind of energy. But - as I shall show in this article, one when he becomes spirit will have that kind of POWER!

Not While Flesh and Blood

The Apostle Paul made clear that the Kingdom of God is something a human may INHERIT, but not in THIS AGE - not while he is composed of material flesh. He may, now, become only an HEIR, not YET an inheritor!

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (I Cor. 15:50).

Leading up to this verse, Paul made it very clear.

"The first man is of the earth, earthy [human]: the second man is the Lord from heaven [- a divine GOD Being]" (I Cor. 15:47).

This is what Jesus was saying to Nicodemus. He was of the earth, earthy - human - he was flesh, not spirit. He was born of the flesh, so that's what he was - FLESH. When one is born of the Spirit, he will BE spirit. Paul here is explaining the same truth.

But we cannot BE spirit in this present age.

THERE IS A TIME ELEMENT CONCERNED WITH BEING BORN AGAIN!

Continue, now, in I Corinthians 15:

"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy" (verse 48). That is precisely what Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus. He was born of the flesh - he WAS flesh. He was born of the earth - he was earthy. And so are we all! And, same verse, "... and as is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly."

But for us humans, WHEN? Not in this life!

Next verse: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall [future - resurrection] also bear the image of the heavenly" (verse 49). As we are now flesh, we shall be SPIRIT - at the resurrection. That is when we shall be "BORN AGAIN" - when we shall see, enter into, the Kingdom of God - when we are spirit - at the resurrection!

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [be dead], 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 [the then living] shall be changed" (verses 50-52). There is the

TIME when we may be born again - when we may see, enter into, inherit the Kingdom - when "BORN AGAIN" - and NOT BEFORE!

How CHANGED When Born Again

HOW shall we be changed? The next words answer!

"For this corruptible" - (flesh, as we now are) - "must put on incorruption" - (spirit - that which is born of God is spirit) - "and this mortal must put on immortality." Be changed from material flesh to spirit!

- Until born again, we cannot see the Kingdom of God - (Jesus to Nicodemus, John 3:3).
- Until born again, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God (Jesus to Nicodemus, John 3:5).
- Until no longer flesh, but changed into SPIRIT, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God - (Jesus to Nicodemus, John 3:6-8). While still flesh and blood (as Nicodemus was and we are) we cannot inherit the Kingdom of God - (Paul to the Corinthians, I Cor. 15:50).
- Until the resurrection, at Christ's coming, we shall not be changed from corruptible flesh into incorruptible SPIRIT (Paul - I Cor. 15:50-53 and verses 22-23).
- Until the resurrection, therefore, we cannot see, enter into, or inherit the Kingdom of God. WE CANNOT BE BORN AGAIN UNTIL THE RESURRECTION!

Now Heirs - Not yet Inheritors

While in our present status, born of the flesh and composed of flesh, we cannot see, enter into, or inherit the Kingdom of God. Notice, now, the status of the truly converted Christian, in this life - this world:

"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). Unless one has received the Holy Spirit, and this Spirit is dwelling in him, he is not a Christian. Joining a church does not make one a Christian. Receiving and following God's Spirit does!

Holy Spirit Entering Compares to Sperm Entering Ovum

But now see how God's Spirit entering and dwelling in one compares to the physical sperm impregnating the ovum - the imparting of eternal SPIRIT life, later to produce - to bring forth - a SPIRIT PERSON! A fertilized ovum - an embryo - is NOT a born human person. Life from the father has been imparted to it - he has begotten it - but neither embryo nor fetus is YET a born person. In the same manner the Spirit-begotten human is not, yet, a SPIRIT PERSON or BEING, as Jesus said he shall be when born again!

Continue: "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 your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (verse 11).

UNDERSTAND THIS! There is a direct comparison between having been born of the flesh, and being born AGAIN of God. Jesus said, that which is born of the flesh is flesh - a born human. That which is born of the Spirit (God) is spirit - a born SPIRIT PERSON!

A mortal human life starts when a sperm cell from the body of the father impregnates - imparts physical LIFE to - an ovum (egg cell) in the mother. At this point the father begets, sires. He does not "bring forth": the mother does that, later. His part in the process in the PROCESS leading to a final birth is then done. BUT THERE IS A TIME ELEMENT. At the TIME of begetting, birth (parturition) has not YET occurred.

It is necessary to make this explanation, at this point, because the popular deception of a deceived traditional "Christianity" is to claim that when one "receives Christ" - "accepts Christ" - "professes Christ" - or first receives God's Holy Spirit to dwell in him, that he is already "BORN AGAIN".

First, then, notice the physical type and comparison.

The TIME Element

In human physical reproduction, there is a TIME ELEMENT. From impregnation - begetting on the part of the father - having conceived on the part of the mother - to BIRTH, or parturition, or being delivered from the mother's womb is a TIME ELEMENT of nine months.

That nine-month period is called gestation. Upon conception, the now fertilized ovum is called an embryo. A few months later, it is called a fetus. But during this nine-month period of gestation, we do not speak of the embryo-fetus as having been born. It is in the PROCESS toward birth. It is the child of its parents. But is then the unborn child of its parents. The father has already begotten it - sired it. But the mother has not yet given birth to it. Yet it is, during the gestation period, the unborn child of the parents.

Now in being "born again", the PROCESS of this birth begins when GOD'S divine SPIRIT- LIFE is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, from His very PERSON, entering to dwell within us. Repeat, from Romans 8:

"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 [change to immortal spirit] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (verse 11). This is describing the same thing explained in I Corinthians 15:50-53, the resurrection.

I want to make this crystal clear. Millions of sincere professing Christians believe that when they profess Christ (or receive His Holy Spirit) they are "born again". What actually happens is this:

The Church Our Mother

When one, after repentance, faith and baptism receives the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God puts him into - baptizes him into God's Church. The Church is called the Body of Christ. So we read: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13).

Again, the Church is called "Jerusalem above", or "the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22-23). Now notice, in Galatians 4:26: "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

The analogy is this: When begotten by God the Father by receiving His Holy Spirit, we are put into the Church, which during this gestation period is our MOTHER.

The human mother of the fetus within her womb serves the function of feeding her unborn child with physical food, so that it may develop and grow physically. And also she carries it where she may best protect it from physical injury or harm, until parturition - delivery from her womb.

The spiritual mother - the Church - is commissioned to "feed the flock" (I Pet. 5:2) through the ministry which God has set in the Church "for the perfecting of the saints ... for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man ..." (Eph. 4:11-13). Just as the human fetus develops and grows physically during the PRE-birth gestation period, so WE, after begetting by God's Spirit, develop and grow SPIRITUALLY in PRE-birth state.

But not only is the Church to feed the members on the Word of God - spiritual food - but also to protect these conceived but yet unborn children of God from spiritual harm, as the very next verse shows: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every kind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ..." (Eph. 4:14).

Then, at the time of the resurrection, we in the Church - the spiritual Mother - shall be DELIVERED from her and born into - brought forth into - the Kingdom - the spirit-composed FAMILY of God.

Sons of God NOW

Now, further: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). The unborn child in his mother's womb is the child of his father and mother, though not yet born - delivered from the womb. So are we, if God's Spirit dwells in us - if we are being led by God's Spirit - children of God. Yet, at this time, we are in the gestation state, not yet that parturition. And only HEIRS. Not inheritors!

Continue: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so that we suffer with him, that we may be [future - at resurrection] also glorified together" (verse 17).

Now we see how this passage designates the resurrection into GLORY - when we shall BE spirit - as a BIRTH!

"For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" - that is the time of Christ's coming to REIGN, and of the resurrection to [being born of] SPIRIT composition - "... because the creation [RSV] itself also shall be delivered [a birth] from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (verses 19-22).

What could be more clear?

Here is another comparison: we shall be delivered from this world (the Church is in, though not of this world) into the glorious WORLD TOMORROW and the Kingdom which shall rule it.

The CREATION is waiting for this time of Christ's coming, the resurrection, and the Kingdom of God. because the creation shall be DELIVERED from the bondage of corruption. Not now delivered - SHALL BE - at the resurrection time! Although this is not referring directly to our being born again, it IS a direct comparison to the BIRTH of a child being DELIVERED from its mother's womb.

The resurrection - the time when we are changed to BE spirit and to INHERIT the Kingdom will be a time of DELIVERY FROM the bondage of corruptible flesh and from this world of SIN - A REAL BIRTH!

Christ Born a Second Time by the resurrection

Continue in Romans 8:

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [Jesus] might be the firstborn among many brethren" (verse 29).

Now compare with Romans 1:3-4: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God ... by the resurrection from the dead."

Jesus was, in the human flesh - His first birth - a descendant of David, and, by the resurrection from the dead - (born AGAIN) - the Son of God, now no longer human, but composed of SPIRIT - a Spirit being. He thus became the FIRST so BORN of many brethren who shall be BORN AGAIN at the time of the resurrection of those who are Christ's.

Of course we understand, and so did Paul in writing the above, That Jesus was also the Son of God while in the human flesh. Though born of a human woman, He was sired by God. But this is comparing the two births - the one from Mary, as descended from the human David - the other, by His resurrection to glory, as Son of God by His resurrection, in the same manner we may be.

Emphatically this does NOT imply that Jesus was a sinner needing salvation. He was the pioneer, setting us the example, that we, too, may be BORN of God.

When Born Again What Shall We Be Like?

When we are born again, what shall we be like?

Here is the answer: "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body [FLESH], that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body ..." (Phil. 3:20-21). And what is Christ's GLORIOUS body like? His eyes are as flames of fire - His face bright as the sun in full strength - Revelation 1:14-16.

A TIME When Begotten but Not YET Born

Thus, scripture after scripture - analogy after analogy - comparison after comparison - shows that being BORN of God is a PROCESS, in which there is a time element. Just as being born of the flesh is a process.

At the time when the father begets and the mother conceives of the union of sperm cell and ovum - the fertilized ovum becomes an embryo. But it is not yet delivered from the womb - not yet born! And will not be for nine months. A pregnancy is in progress. Yet during this period of physical development and growth, it is the unborn child of its parents.

In like manner, at the time when the Spirit Father, God, begets a human with the Spirit (the spiritual counterpart of the physical sperm) - the Holy Spirit - he becomes a son of God! He is then already a son of God.

But he is still human - he is still material flesh and blood. He must now undergo a period (until death, the resurrection) of spiritual development and growth. He is in the gestation state in the PROCESS toward being born. He is in the CHURCH of God, but the Church is not the KINGDOM of God.

The Church is composed of human, flesh-and-blood children of God. And, flesh and blood cannot see, cannot enter into, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is made up of spirit-composed children of God. The Spirit-begotten human in the Church is in the process of being born of God, BUT he has not yet entered the Kingdom of God. He has not yet been BORN of God.

He is in the gestation state toward spirit-BIRTH, but not yet BORN of the Spirit. He yet has a lot of spiritual developing and growing to do - acquiring the spiritual character-image of God.

POWER Greater Than Energy of Wind

There is another passage, understood by almost none, that reveals our astonishing transcendent potential!

It begins in Hebrews 2, verse 6. But first, notice about Christ, in chapter 1:

"God ... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things [Moffat and others, the universe], by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, [Moffat] stamped with God's own character and upholding [sustaining] the universe by the word of his power ..." (Heb. 1:1-3). ALL POWER, in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18) has been given to Christ. He is now Chief Executive of God's Government of the UNIVERSE.

Now begin with Hebrews 2:6; a citation from Psalms 8:4-6:

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

Yes, why should the Great God be concerned about us mortals? WHY did He put us here on earth? What is the PURPOSE of life what is our transcendent potential? It is so far above and beyond of what you have thought or imagined, it seems shockingly incredible!

Can you believe it? Are you willing to believe what is now plainly stated? Here comes the astonishing answer, beginning verse 7:

"Thou maddest him a little lower than the angels." Some translations have it, "for a little while lower than the angels." Continue: "Thou crownedst him [kingship] with GLORY and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands ..." - that is, God's creation. Continue:

NOT YET the Universe!

"Thou hast put ALL THINGS [Moffat: the UNIVERSE] in subjection under his feet. For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him...." Can you grasp that? The entire vast, endless UNIVERSE! But that is for the BORN sons of God. Man is not yet BORN - except Christ only! Continue: "Here comes the answer: "...But now [in this present gestation state] we see NOT YET all things [the universe] put under him " (verse 8). (Emphasis mine.)

But what do we see, NOW?

"But we see JESUS ... crowned with glory and honour" (verse 9). Yes, as revealed in chapter 1, Jesus has already been given the executive administration of God's Government - the KINGDOM of GOD - over the entire UNIVERSE! Only, until our time to inherit and possess the government on EARTH, at Christ's return, He is allowing Satan to continue on this earth his work of deception. Now continue:

"For it became him [Jesus], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto GLORY, to make the captain [margin, leader - or, forerunner, pioneer - the One who has gone on before us, as we are to follow] of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (verses 10-11).

Christ First Born of Many

We are, as quoted before, heirs of God, and joint-heirs - as BRETHERN - with Christ. He has gone on ahead, through a resurrection, to GLORY as the pioneer!

He is the firstborn of many brethren! He has INHERITED "all things" - the UNIVERSE! We are still heirs - still in the gestation stage of the process of being BORN of God. Jesus is now our High Priest, supervising our spiritual development - preparing us to be kings and priests, reigning with Him! The first thousand years we shall reign ON THE EARTH. For He shall have "made them kings and priests: and they shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10, RSV).

The First Thousand Years

For that first thousand years, Jesus is to reign on the throne of His earthly ancestor DAVID in Jerusalem (Isa. 9:6-7). And, "he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ..." (Rev. 2:26-27). But how and from where shall we rule?

Jesus said, again, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne [Jerusalem], even as I also overcame, and am [now] set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

When BORN of God, we shall BE spirit, no longer human flesh and blood. We shall be given POWER! As Daniel revealed, the saints then shall take the kingdoms of earth's nations and RULE them - for the first thousand years.

And ... after that? The passage in Hebrews 2 shows that then, under Christ, we shall be given power to rule over the entire vast universe - literally ALL THINGS. For that is the power that has been given to Christ, and we are joint-heirs, to become joint-INHERITORS with Him.

All Power - The UNIVERSE

Most people have past right over many vital statements in the Bible, not recognizing their tremendous import!

Let me give you a few. Ask yourself if you have ever recognized the true import of these statements in God's Word?

- Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them [after the resurrection], saying. ALL POWER is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
- Matthew 11:27: Jesus said: "ALL THINGS [the whole universe] are delivered unto me of my Father"
- John 3:35: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given ALL THINGS into his hand."
- John 13:3: During the last Passover, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given ALL THINGS into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God...."
- John 16:15: "ALL THINGS that the Father hath are mine...."
- I Corinthians 15:27: "For he [the Father] hath put ALL THINGS under his [Christ's] feet. But when he saith ALL THINGS are put under him, it is manifest that he [the Father] is excepted, which did put ALL THINGS under him. And when ALL THINGS shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put ALL THINGS under him, that God may be all in all" (verse 28).

And - incredible, yet true! - we, in Christ, are made co-heirs with Christ in this ultimate supreme rule. Incidentally, I Corinthians 15:27-28, along with verses 22-26, indicates that our reign over the universe shall follow the thousand years' reign on the earth.

Must GROW During Gestation

Human life starts with what the Bible terms "corruptible seed" - physical male sperm. Divine life starts with that which is incorruptible - the Holy Spirit of God entering the human person. But as the human embryo must GROW till it becomes a fetus, which must GROW to the point of being born in the human family, so the Christian in whom divine life has been started by the gift of God's incorruptible Spirit must GROW toward perfection to be born into the God Family. He will then be perfect, unable to sin.

Peter gives an analogy of this:

"Being born again ..." (I Pet. 1:23). Being - in process of not having been - not yet an immortal person - but being "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible...." (Other translations use the term "begotten.") Greek: anagennao - to beget anew - (Young). Peter is here referring to the process having started within us by the incorruptible Spirit of God - not as our human life was begotten by human physical sperm. Peter here shows that the Spirit of God is the incorruptible "seed" that imparted the presence of eternal life within us. Continue: "by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

Peter continues, chapter 2: "Wherefore ... as newborn babes ..." Not that we are already- born perfect divine spirit persons having entered into and inherited God's Kingdom. He is comparing the Christian's spiritual "gestation" period to the growth of a newborn human baby simply because it would be awkward indeed to compare it to a physical embryo or fetus. He is not saying we are already born babes in God's Kingdom - but as - or like newborn human babes. It is an analogy, which Webster says is a comparison or "likeness between two things ... consisting in the resemblance not of the things themselves, but of two or more attributes, circumstances or effects."

Peter is simply showing that, as a newborn human babe must be nourished and GROW physically (even, for that matter, as must be an unborn fetus), so Christians must grow spiritually. Continue: "desire the sincere milk of the word" (RSV has: "long for the pure spiritual milk") "that ye may GROW thereby" (I Pet. 2:1-2). Paul styled it "unto the perfect man" (Eph. 4:13) - unable to sin. When born again, we shall not be helpless spirit BABES, but spirit beings of perfection unable to sin. This spiritual Christian GROWTH is in spiritual character and knowledge in this present human life. As a physical babe must grow physically, so we in Christian life must grow in spiritual knowledge and character (see II Pet. 3:18) to become PERFECT, which we shall never attain UNTIL born as spirit beings.

The Comparison

During our converted human Christian life, we are already children of God, as yet unborn. We have within us through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the presence of ETERNAL LIFE - Spirit life - divine life - BUT, only from and through GOD. We do not, yet, have any eternal life inherent - of ourselves, independent of God! And, WE COULD LOSE IT - be aborted!

This compares to the unborn physical fetus, in the gestation period. It has human life - but only through the umbilical cord and FROM the mother - NOT independently of itself. And it can be aborted!

This is so clearly brought out in the Bible, in I John 5:11-12: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

It is NOT inherent in us. We do not now in this life have BORN life of our own, independent of Him. Our contact with Him through His Spirit is the umbilical cord through which we are partaking of eternal life from Him. Continue, verse 12: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life." If one is cut off from Christ, he has NO eternal life.

A BORN human baby has human life on its own - independent of its mother. THAT DEFINES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE STATE OF BEGETTAL AND A BORN STATE! The only difference is, in the Christian life we are fed and protected by and through the spiritual Mother the Church, while our actual eternal life comes into us through and from GOD. But when BORN again, of GOD, we shall have ETERNAL LIFE INHERENT - of our own! We are NOT now in that state!

HOW Jesus Was the ONLY Begotten Son

King David of Israel had God's Holy Spirit. Praying for forgiveness, following his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, he implored: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:10-11).

The prophets had received God's Holy Spirit. Peter wrote: "... Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21). They could not be called "holy men" unless God's Spirit was within them.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are to be seen in the Kingdom of God. Jesus said so. Therefore God's Spirit was "dwelling in them" they were begotten of God - but THEY WERE NOT BORN OF GOD - for Jesus is the firstborn of many brethren.

But if they were begotten of God by the Holy Spirit - and hundreds of years before Christ was born, how could Jesus be called "the ONLY begotten Son of God"?

ANSWER: The scriptures calling Jesus the ONLY begotten Son of God all apply to His begettal as the human Son, His first birth - born of the human mother, Mary. Jesus was the ONLY human ever begotten by God prior to HUMAN birth. In Revelation 1:5, the A.V. speaks of Christ as the first begotten - but other translations render it, properly firstBORN - referring to His resurrection, not His human birth from His mother Mary.

Jesus was NOT the first begotten in the sense that Abraham, David and Old testament prophets were begotten.

Before Jesus was conceived by Mary, He was not the SON of God. God is the divine FAMILY. He was one of that Family. In John 1:1 He is called the "Logos" - the Word. He, like the Father, had existed eternally. But He is nowhere in God's Word referred to as SON of God prior to conception by Mary. His human birth was His first birth. He gave up the GLORY He had with the Father in order to be born into the world to save the world.

Abraham and many others - prophets and writers of the Bible were begotten of God - they were in the same identical state as human Christians who have God's Spirit within them today. But they have not, even yet, INHERITED - entered into - the Kingdom of God. They have not yet been BORN of God.

Jesus had to be the FIRST to be BORN of God - the FIRST-BORN of many brethren. That was His second birth, as the resurrection will be ours! "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise [were not born into the KINGDOM]: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39-40).

This again, PROVES that the conversion in this life - receiving the Holy Spirit - is only a begettal - NOT a birth! For Old Testament fathers and prophets received God's Spirit - but they were not "born again" because Jesus was the first so born!

How does this PROCESS of being born again take place?

What Is the WAY?

Peter gave the WAY, and the conditions. Repent, he said, and be baptized, as an act of FAITH in Christ, His shed blood in payment for the penalty of our sins, and His resurrection making possible our eternal life and being born again. Then, he said, we shall receive the Holy Spirit.

Those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells ARE CHRIST'S (Rom. 8:9); all the others are not. But IF God's Spirit dwells in them God will, by a resurrection AS He raised Christ from the dead, bring forth all such in immortal spirit life - composed of spirit as Christ is.

All these scriptures MAKE CLEARLY PLAIN that we are to be BORN AGAIN by, and ONLY by, a resurrection to spirit composition.

We are now heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ - NOT YET INHERITORS, or possessors of the Kingdom.

The Human Birth

What is a birth - what is meant by being born?

The actual final birth is called parturition - a baby being delivered out of its mother's womb.

But this birth requires a father, as well as a mother! If it were not for the PART the father contributes in the process, there would be no fetus to be born. But THERE IS A TIME ELEMENT. The father's part in what shall, later, be birth is to beget - to gender - to sire. From his body emanates the sperm cell that unites with and starts life in an ovum within the mother. This occurs 9 months prior to parturition - or birth.

We never say, in the English language, that immediately when an embryo is conceived in the mother - sired or begotten by the father - that the embryo has already been BORN! Birth has not occurred! To say it would sound idiotic, ridiculous!

From conception must follow the PROCESS called gestation for 9 months. The embryo takes on human form and is called a fetus. It must develop and grow physically to be born.

So with being born again, in a spiritual birth.

What comes from the divine Father is the Holy Spirit. Just as the unborn child in the mother's womb is, even in the fetal state, the child (yet unborn) of its parents, so those in whom God's Spirit dwells are, already, children of God. But they are still OF this first birth - still human - still composed of physical flesh. They are still in their spiritual Mother - the Church which is still in this corruptible present world, though not of it. When born of the Spirit, said Jesus, they shall BE spirit.

But IF God's Spirit dwells in them, God then will resurrect them (if they are dead), or change them (if still living) from physical to spirit composition at Christ's coming. They will then be brought forth - delivered from their Mother, the Church, into the Kingdom of God.

Of the first birth we are, and remain, FLESH! HUMAN beings!

Of the second birth, which is spiritual, we shall BE spirit, no longer flesh - but SPIRIT beings! - Divine Beings!

The Greek Words

The New Testament of the Holy Bible was originally written in the Greek language. It is inevitable that some difficulties confront translators in the rendering from one language to another.

For example, there are some idiomatic expressions common to one language that have no equivalent in another.

One word may have more than one meaning in a language where the equivalent word in another language would not have the same different meanings. For example, the English word saw may mean did see, or it might mean - as a noun - a carpenter's instrument to cut through wood, or, as a verb it may mean to cut with a saw.

However, by checking different translations, and by UNDERSTANDING of the context and all other passages of the Bible in relation to the same subject, we may come to the correct meaning as expressed in English.

One such example is the original Greek word for the English born - a word Jesus used in speaking to Nicodemus.

The Greek word used in John 3:3-8 for born is *gennao* (pronounced ghen-ah-o). Here are the English definitions of the Greek *gennao* from leading lexicons - Greek-English dictionaries:

Thayer: "*gennao*: 1. properly: of men begetting children. Matt. 1:1-16; Acts 7:8,29; foll. by ek with gen. of the mother, Matt. 1:3,5,6; more rarely of women giving birth to children. Lk. 1:13,57; 23:29; Jn. 16:21, etc. 2.a. univ. to engender, cause to arise, excite ... d. peculiarly in the Gosp. and 1st Ep. of John, of God conferring upon men the nature and disposition of His sons, imparting to them spiritual life i.e. by His own holy power, prompting and persuading souls to put faith in Christ and live a new life consecrated to Himself.

Liddell and Scott: "*gennao*: to beget, of the father; to bear, bring forth, of the mother: II, to generate, produce."

(Webster defines "generate" "to beget; procreate.")

Strong: "gennao: 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."

Young: "Gennao: to beget, bring forth."

George Ricker Berry: "gennao: to beget, give birth to, produce, effect; pass., to be begotten, born (often in John of spiritual renewal)" (That is, receiving or having received the Holy Spirit, being begotten).

One man, a native Greek from Cyprus, in a private communication, states it this way: "the verb gennao denotes the PRODUCTION THROUGH BIRTH." And further ... "denotes a production through a process that always includes a birth." He put major emphasis on birth, rather than begetting or conception - but when asked if it does not INCLUDE an impregnation by male sperm, and conception, as well as gestation period, he agreed that it does.

However, it is to be noted that the scholarly AUTHORITIES whose definitions are quoted above, all put first and primary emphasis on begetting by the father. It is, as I have always said, A PROCESS, with the time element at different stages of the process.

It might be made more clear, in nontechnical language, to explain that in some languages words may be all-inclusive as to TIME, without distinction as to past, present, or future state of a process. For example, in German there are not the two words designating of being an heir to an inheritor. The one German word would be used in describing a young man who is his father's heir, having not yet inherited anything, or a man who, after the death of his father, has become an inheritor of his father's estate.

A Frenchman said, "If I were an author, I would much prefer to write in English, because there are so many more words, expressing various shades of meaning."

There is a TIME PERIOD between fertilization by a male sperm and parturition - delivery from the womb - which state as to time, in English, is medically termed gestation. We never refer, in English, to that gestation state as a born state. Likewise, in English, we cannot properly refer to the Christian in whom God's Spirit dwells as having been "born" of God. My commission is to make the truth PLAIN in English.

Definition: "Supernatural Begettal by the Holy Spirit"

"To beget means begetting, the action or process of generating or producing; generation" [from New English Dictionary of Historical Principles, 1988]. It is interesting also, in this dictionary to find the following: "Begettal (f. beget v. + al, cf. Commital) Begetting, 1873, C.M. Davies: They believe in his preternatural begettal by the Holy Spirit."

Thus, the one Greek word, gennao, means PRODUCTION THROUGH A PROCESS that includes and is generated by the imparting of the fertilizing or life-giving element by the father. There is a TIME when culmination in BIRTH has not yet occurred.

In the Greek, gennao, the word is all-inclusive as a PRODUCTION PROCESS. But in English, the word birth is NOT all-inclusive, and refers only to the final stage of the process - the time of parturition - delivery of child from the womb. One's birthday in English always means the DAY - or anniversary of the day of his delivery from his mother's womb.

Status of Christian, NOW

Now let us notice one of the problems to be expected in rendering the verb gennao into our being born again of God.

When Jesus was talking with Nicodemus, He was referring to the TIME when we may see, enter into, the Kingdom of God. And that is the TIME of final BIRTH. For the Kingdom is literally the Family of God. Therefore the translators correctly rendered the Greek gennao in John 3:3-8 in the English word born.

Combining this with I Corinthians 15:45-53, the resurrection chapter, it is made absolutely plain that we do not enter into and inherit the Kingdom of God while still flesh and blood, but only after the resurrection to SPIRIT COMPOSITION.

Being born again refers to the time - the future state - when we shall BE spirit, no longer flesh and blood - born actually by the resurrection.

But in certain passages, the Greek *gennao* is used, in referring to the present state of those who have received the spiritual life-begetting, impregnating Holy Spirit. They are, upon receiving His Holy Spirit, children of God, in the same sense that the embryo-fetus is the unborn child of its human parents.

We are in the state - the TIME ELEMENT - after generation-conception, but prior to birth. In the human instance, the medical term for this state is gestation.

We are NOW begotten children of God - but still flesh-and-blood humans - still heirs - not yet spirit-composed divine beings not yet inheritors - not yet having been "brought forth" into, or seen, or inherited the Kingdom of God - therefore, not yet BORN of God.

In other words - shocking though His truth may sound to some to whom this truth is new, that which is born of humans is born into the human family - the human kingdom - and that which is born of God is born into the GOD Family - the GOD Kingdom - the Kingdom or Family of GOD! But while still flesh and blood, we are merely begotten of God - we have not yet been "brought forth" into His FAMILY - His KINGDOM!

The English Verb, "Beget"

Now a word of explanation about this English verb *beget* - or the adjective form, *begotten*.

The simple dictionary definition, (Webster) is: "1: to procreate, as the father: sire. 2: CAUSE." Above, I quoted the definition from the New English Dictionary of Historical Principles; "begetting, the action or process of generating or producing"

Also this same dictionary in giving an example of the use of *begettal* in a sentence, quotes, from author C. M. Davies, 1873: "They believe in his preternatural [supernatural] *begettal* by the Holy Spirit."

Beget refers to the father. And the father's action is to cause the start of the process toward birth.

Various Translations

Since the new Testament was originally written in the Greek language, our English language Bibles have been translated from the Greek.

And since the Greek *gennao* is an all-inclusive term - referring to the begetting by the father, but also, secondarily according to the lexicons, including the process culminating in birth, the translators had to decide which English term to use in each case.

It had been the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that their church is the Kingdom of God. When one embraces the Catholic faith, he is regarded by Catholicism as having already entered into the Kingdom of God. Protestants have largely followed this assumption as applying to Protestantism, though some regard the Kingdom of God as some ethereal something "set up in men's hearts." Many translators assumed this error. This led to translating *gennao* into the English term *born* in many instances where it rightly should be translated *begotten*. They simply chose the English term which conformed to their erroneous belief. And since the Greek *gennao* is a term including the whole process of birth even from conception, they in some cases translated *gennao* by the English word *born* - where I have PROVED by many passages flesh and blood humans have NOT been yet BORN again, of God.

In every instance where the Greek *gennao* refers to Spirit-begotten Christians, it should be rendered "begotten."

Notice a few outstanding examples!

In John 1:13, the Authorized, or King James, Version of the Bible renders it: "... Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." In the American Revised Version a marginal rendering says: "or, begotten," as it should be. Other examples appear in John's first epistle.

Notice:

In the American Revised Version I John 2:29 is correctly translated: "is begotten of Him"; but in the A.V. it is, incorrectly, "... every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him."

I John 4:7, the A.V. incorrectly has it: "... and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." But the Revised Version corrected this error, rendering it: "... is begotten of God."

I John 5:1, in the A.V. incorrectly has it: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."

Here, this same Greek word, *gennao*, was inspired by the Holy Spirit three times in the same verse. The first time, the King James translators erroneously rendered it into the English word "born". The second time *gennao* is used in the Greek they could not render it "him that was BORN" or "him that 'borned'" - for it refers to God, and not the human believer. Here they were forced to choose the correct translation of *gennao*, in the past tense, as "begat". Then, since they already had to use the past tense "begat" in that instance, they also correctly rendered it, in the third place the word occurred, "is begotten".

The Revised Version also corrected this error, rightly rendering it: "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God, and whosoever loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." One final example: I John 5:4 - the A.V. erroneously renders it: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world ..." but the Revised Version corrected it to read: "Whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world"

Correctly Translated

Now quickly notice a few instances where the SAME GREEK WORD was correctly translated "begotten". I Cor. 4:15, the Apostle Paul is talking to those converted under his ministry. "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." There it is correctly translated, showing that Paul's converts at Corinth, as his "spiritual children", had been begotten of God, but not yet BORN.

The experience of conversion, in this life, is a begettal a "conception" - an "impregnation" - but NOT YET A BIRTH! This we have made very PLAIN!

One more - Heb. 1:5 - speaking of CHRIST'S begettal in the virgin Mary. This verse shows that Christ, later BORN of God by a resurrection of the dead (Rom. 1:4), was an actual BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD, in a manner that no angel is, or can be. Angels are merely created beings. They are not actually begotten of God, so in this sense they are not His born sons, as Christ now is - and as we may also be. Notice this verse: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?" Now that ought to be plain. A converted person - one who has repented, accepted Christ as saviour, received God's Holy Spirit, does have a changed attitude and outlook and purpose - his whole character begins to change, and travel in a opposite direction. BUT HE IS NOT INVISIBLE TO THE HUMAN EYES OF OTHER PEOPLE! He is not composed of SPIRIT. He is still composed of material flesh, even though God's Holy Spirit has entered, and now dwells in, and leads his HUMAN MIND.

When He Cannot Sin

There is a particular verse that has puzzled millions, discouraged thousands who didn't understand, and caused some to accuse the Bible of contradicting itself.

Look at this verse! It says: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9).

Now is that a contradiction of verse 8 of the first chapter of the same book which says we deceive ourselves if we think we have no sin? The answer is easy to understand.

Remember that in New Testament language the pronoun "we" or "us" refers to converted Christians. (The unconverted are referred to as "they" or "them". An example is I Thes. 5:3,4. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them ... and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.")

I John 1:8-9 reads: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we [Christians]" - this verse is referring to sins committed, though of course not deliberately and willfully, after being converted - "confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we [we CHRISTIANS] say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (verse 10). Then, the next verse, I John 2:1: "... And if any man sin, we [Christians] have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It is here speaking of Christ in His present office as our High Priest.

Christians Should Not Sin

Of course the Bible teaches that Christians should not sin. The first part of I John 2:1 (not quoted above) teaches that. The emphasis all through the New Testament is on rooting out sin overcoming sin - growing in God's righteousness, always toward perfection.

But these and numerous other verses (especially the Apostle Paul's experience, Romans 7:14- 25) say plainly that converted Christians do sin - though not habitually practicing sin deliberately and willfully. Certainly it is not impossible!

Look at Jesus Christ Himself! The Scriptures say He did not sin - yet they teach plainly that at all times it was entirely possible for Him to sin. Jesus, in the human flesh, "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). No scripture says that He could not sin.

So here we have many scriptures showing that it is NOT IMPOSSIBLE for converted Christians to sin - it was NOT IMPOSSIBLE even for Jesus! Yet, in I John 3:9, in the A.V., we have the flat statement that, if and when we are actually born of God, we shall not be able to sin - IT WILL THEN BE IMPOSSIBLE!

Two Translations

Here, again, the translators had to decide how to render the verb gennao. And it MUST be decided by the meaning in the context as a whole.

Some modern translators render it "begotten" supposing the passage is talking about Christians NOW not continuing in indifferent practicing of sin, as they did before conversion. They know well that it is NOT IMPOSSIBLE for a human Christian, NOW, to sin. So they render it in the sense of continuing in the habitual practicing of sin, once begotten of God.

On the other hand, it also CAN be rendered "BORN" as in the A.V., without any contradiction.

Notice this, in I John 3:1: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called THE SONS OF GOD. ... Beloved , NOW ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD, and it doeth not yet

appear what we shall be: but we know that, when HE [Christ at His second coming] shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; for we shall SEE HIM as he is" (I John 3:1-2).

This is speaking of the time when we shall be spirit - BORN of God.

WHAT We Shall Be

Now notice that! Understand WHAT we shall be, when we are BORN of God! Then, next we shall see - still further - WHEN we shall be born of God.

This scripture, in this marvelous 3rd chapter of I John, plainly says that "WE" - meaning begotten, converted CHRISTIANS - are, now, already, the SONS of God. Yes, of course, and the tiny embryo, no larger than a pinpoint in its mother's womb is, already the SON (or daughter) of its human father, even though not yet BORN.

Next, this scripture reveals that "it doeth not yet appear WHAT WE SHALL BE."

Grasp that! Isn't it PLAIN? We are, later, to BE something different. Of course! Although we already are begotten SONS of God, we are still FLESH - still matter - still VISIBLE. BUT WHAT WE SHALL BE has not, yet, appeared. As Jesus explained to Nicodemus, we SHALL BE immortal SPIRIT. That is what we shall later be!

BUT, this scripture continues - READ IT! - UNDERSTAND this wonderful, WONDERFUL TRUTH! - we know that, when HE, Christ, shall appear at His second coming to earth, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM!

Now what shall HE be like? If you can know that, you can know what BORN-AGAIN Christians shall then be like - for they shall be LIKE HIM!

What does the GLORIFIED Christ look like? His eyes blaze forth like flames of fire! His feet glow like finely burnished brass. His face shines like the SUN, in FULL STRENGTH - so bright, it would blind your eyes if He were visible to you now! (Rev. 1:14-16; 19:12-13; Matt. 17:2.)

And THAT is the way YOU and I shall look, if and when we are finally BORN of GOD! These deceived people who talk about having had a "born-again experience" certainly don't look like THAT!

WHEN Born Again?

That tremendous, glorious event of being BORN of God is to take place AT THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST - at the time of Christ's second coming to earth!

We are now flesh - vile corruptible flesh subject to rotting and decay. But at Christ's coming, when we shall be born of God, this vile body shall be changed, and made exactly like Jesus in His glorified body! Yes, I know this is probably too wonderful for you to grasp!

But scripture after scripture piles up on us, confirming this tremendous truth!

Look at the very resurrection chapter, I Corinthians 15.

The Bible, which is God's message and instruction to mankind, nowhere teaches any such thing as the pagan doctrine of an "immortal soul" going to heaven at death. It teaches that the soul is mortal and shall die (Ezek. 18:4,20).

But it does teach the resurrection of the dead.

Now, when? At Christ's second coming!

"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 [that was more than 1900 years ago]; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Cor. 15:22-23).

That is WHEN - at Christ's COMING! And notice, Christ is the "firstfruits" - the first of those who have been human to be BORN OF GOD by a resurrection from the dead! The true resurrection from the dead!

What Kind of Body?

Now how? What kind of body? That question is asked in verse 35. Notice GOD'S answer:

"... That which thou sowest" - bury in the ground - "thou sowest not that body that shall be" (verse 37). The IMMORTAL body that comes up in the resurrection will not be this vile, rotting body of material flesh - but a different body. Continue: "But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him. ... So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. ... It is sown a natural body" - that is, of NATURE - MATERIAL FLESH - "it is raised a SPIRITUAL BODY" - composed of SPIRIT! "And as we have borne the image of the earthy" - material flesh - of the earth - earthy (verse 49) - "we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" - like GOD - like CHRIST in His glorified body!

The remainder of this passage we have covered earlier.

Christ only the first

I have been the father of two sons. I am human. They, begotten of ME, were born HUMAN, as I am! When we are BORN of GOD, we shall be of HIS VERY FAMILY. We shall be SPIRIT as He is Spirit - immortal as HE is immortal - divine as HE is divine!

Why does not organized professed "Christianity" KNOW that? Why should that seem incredible, impossible, or even to some like blasphemy?

WHY?

The New Testament of your Bible teaches that truth all the way through! Jesus taught it! Paul taught it! Peter taught it! John taught it! The Holy Spirit INSPIRED IT, repeatedly!

You have seen, in Philippians 3:20-21, how, as stated just above in I Cor, 15, at Christ's coming our vile bodies shall be changed into SPIRIT, made IMMORTAL, fashioned like Christ's GLORIFIED BODY. That is when we shall be BORN of God. And THAT change does not take place in THIS LIFE! All these sincere people who think they have been "born again" HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED THAT CHANGE!

Now we saw in I Cor. 15:23, that Christ, who was BORN OF GOD by His resurrection, was the FIRSTfruits of those to be resurrected - those to be BORN AGAIN!

Now believe other scriptures which say the same thing!

Believe Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the IMAGE of his Son [Christ], that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Christ was born a SON of God by a resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). He was only the first to be so BORN of GOD, of MANY BRETHREN. We are to be in His same IMAGE - as He is, NOW! We are to be put on HIS SAME PLANE - as His BRETHREN - to be also BORN OF GOD to become GOD'S SONS!

We are already begotten sons - if really converted - but what we SHALL BE, in the resurrected GLORIFIED BODY - does not yet APPEAR - cannot yet be seen (I John 3:1- 2).

God is to have MANY SONS born of Him. Of all these, JESUS was the first to be SO BORN. He is the ONLY human so far BORN of God, though many have already been BEGOTTEN!

Believe Colossians 1:15,18: Speaking of Jesus "who is the IMAGE of the INVISIBLE GOD, the FIRSTBORN of every creature ... the FIRSTBORN from the dead." Yes, just the first of many BRETHREN, in the very IMAGE of bright shining GLORY of the INVISIBLE GOD. And we are to be conformed to the SAME IMAGE (Rom. 8:29).

Will You BELIEVE?

Now will you believe what God says in the book of Hebrews?

WHY should God be concerned about human beings? From a small airplane we look like little ants down here. From a jet 5 to 6 miles high, people on the ground have shrunk so small they can't be seen. HOW TINY must we look to GOD? WHY should He have concern for us?

The question is answered in Hebrews 2, beginning verse 6. God made man a little lower than the angels, but, in God's PURPOSE and PLAN, He has CROWNED man, as He first has Christ, with GLORY and HONOR.

What is the GLORY with which Christ is now CROWNED? A crown denotes KINGSHIP - rule - authority - power. Jesus Christ said, just before ascending to heaven, that ALL POWER in the universe - in heaven and in earth - had been given to HIM.

In Heb. 1:1-3, it is revealed that Christ now is the BRIGHTNESS of God's GLORY!

Yes, His eyes like flashing flames of fire - His face shining bright as the full-strength SUN.

Christ's GLORY is such that He sustains, upholds, controls, every force, energy, and power that exists EVERYWHERE - supreme POWER over the universe!

Now believe what God says about US! - Hebrews 2:10, "For it became him ... in bringing MANY SONS UNTO GLORY, to make the captain [margin, Leader, or Predecessor, or Pioneer] of their salvation perfect through sufferings." And in verse 11 Jesus calls us His BROTHERS.

Oh, what matchless, transcendent GLORY God purposes for us - when we are BORN AGAIN! Revelation 1:13-17 gives a graphic description of that future glory.

WHY Not Now?

But, as we read in Heb. 2:8, we do not see YET all this GLORY having been inherited by any but CHRIST. WHY, then are we not YET born?

Because, when we are, we are to be given such POWERS to guide, direct, and control, that we must first BE TRAINED and have the PERFECT SPIRITUAL CHARACTER developed in us so that we may safely be entrusted with such vast powers!

God CREATED this universe. He is the REAL Supreme Ruler! He is not going to turn over that power to rule to any except those who will rule HIS WAY, who will OBEY HIM, obey HIS GOVERNMENT, and carry out HIS GOVERNMENT, UNDER HIM!

So, it is ONLY those that are LED BY God's Holy Spirit in HIS WAYS who are the SONS of God (Rom. 8:14). And we have to begin OVERCOMING our own self-natures, the wrong WAYS of this world which have become fixed HABIT, and the devil. We must "GROW in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

Yes, even as the unborn, but begotten, human baby must GROW from its beginning size no larger than a pinpoint, fed on physical food, so once we are impregnated by GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT - HIS LIFE - WE

MUST GROW SPIRITUALLY, fed on the SPIRITUAL FOOD of God's Word the BIBLE, and by PRAYER, and what fellowship is possible with truly begotten BRETHREN in God's TRUTH.

And UNLESS we do continue to GROW in spiritual character development, more and more LIKE GOD, we become like the unborn babe that miscarries - or like an abortion! AND SUCH SHALL NEVER BE BORN OF GOD!

Glorious World Tomorrow

What WONDERFUL, almost INCOMPREHENSIBLE, GLORIOUS GOOD NEWS!

And the BEST NEWS is, that the COMING OF CHRIST is now drawing VERY NEAR! Just a very few more years! And then - the PEACEFUL, HAPPY, GLORIOUS WORLD TOMORROW!

All who NOW are begotten sons of God shall then be BORN - elevated from mortal to IMMORTAL, from decaying FLESH to SPIRIT - from HUMAN to DIVINE!

And THAT TRUE BORN-AGAIN EXPERIENCE will be incomparably more GLORIOUS than the false, vague, meaningless, so-called "born-again experience" that deceived THOUSANDS think they have had now.

Can your mind grasp what an incredible, transcendent GLORY is the true potential of those who do BELIEVE, REPENT and OBEY?

But, the scriptures that break before our eyes this GLORIOUS GOOD NEWS, also warn us to TAKE HEED, and to MAKE OUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE!