

EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH

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The New Birth and Repentance

The scriptures teach that when people are born again, God writes his laws within their hearts and their minds. We quote the following seven passages that prove this principle:

A. Psm. 37:30, 31 - "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide."

B. Psm. 40:8 - "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

C. Jer. 31:33 - "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

D. Heb. 8:10 - "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

E. Heb. 10:16 - "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them."

F. II Cor. 3:3 - "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

G. Rom. 2:14, 15 - "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."

We draw several conclusions from the above seven passages:

A. God writes his laws directly into the hearts and minds of his children, there are no inter-mediators.

B. These laws written in the hearts and minds of God's people serve as the foundation of the new covenant of worship.

C. These laws manifest themselves in the lives of God's people.

D. These laws serve as the foundation of a court room set up in the hearts and minds of God's people.

Upon the last conclusion we expand using Rom. 2:14, 15. There can be no trial or judgment without a law. No one can be tried for breaking a law when there is no law. In a court room there are laws, witnesses, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and a judge. First, the laws are in the hearts and minds of God's people. Secondly, God has given us a conscience whose purpose is to be a faithful witness. Thirdly, our thoughts through either accusing us or excusing us serve as both the prosecutor and the defense attorney. Finally, our hearts serve as the judge (I John 4:20).

God has built within each of his children a court room. The trials within our heart and mind serve to convict us and lead us to repentance. First, we are convicted of our own sinful condition which causes us to see ourselves as condemned before a just and holy God. Afterwards, we are enabled, by faith in Christ's atoning blood, to see Jesus as our Savior. Thus the court room of our heart and mind has served to both convict us and to justify us. For an example of these principles I encourage the reader to look at Isaiah's experience in Isaiah Chapter 6.

Secondly, this court room serves to convict us of individual sins, thus causing Godly sorrow within us. This in turn leads us to repent (II Cor. 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.") We do not repent in order to be born again or to become a child of God, but we repent because we are born again!

Finally, we ask ourselves, "What laws are written in our hearts and minds when we are born again?" I Thes. 4:9, tells us that God teaches us to love one another, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." Similarly, I John 4:7 reads, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." Again, I John 3:14 says, "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." From the above we can conclude that love comes from God and is placed within us when we are born again. God teaches us to love directly by writing the laws of love within our hearts. The Lord taught us that there are two great laws of love in Matt. 22:37-40, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Rom. 13:8, 20 teaches us that "love

is the fulfilling of the law." Likewise, Gal. 5:14 reads, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Paul told Timothy in I Tim. 1:5, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

Finally, James wrote in James 2:8, "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well."

On the negative side we can conclude that before a man is born again, he will not love his neighbor or God, he will be totally selfish in his actions, he will have no conviction of sin or sins, and he will not repent or believe that Christ is his savior. The gospel is foolishness to him (I Cor. 1:18).

Conversely, the man that is born again, having the laws of love in his heart, will love both God and his neighbor, will manifest unselfish love, will be convicted of sin and of individual sins, will be led to repent, rejoice in the gospel of his salvation, and by faith see Jesus as his savior.

Only One Way to be Born Again

How many ways are there for being born again? Were people in the Old Testament days born-again in a different way than in these New Testament days? Are those who die in infancy or those who are mentally incapable of responding to the gospel born-again in a different way than those who do hear the gospel? Are people who never have an opportunity to hear the gospel born-again in a different way than those who hear the gospel? We read in John 3:8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. In a previous installment we noted that this scripture taught the sovereignty of God in bringing about the new birth. It also teaches us that "every one" is born of the Spirit in the same way. There is no such thing as some being born of the Spirit in one way and others being born-again in a different way.

I want to look at five examples of people who were born again at different times and under different circumstances. It will be noted that they were all born-again by the grace of God without man's help or cooperation.

Let us first look at David. David said in Psalms. 22:9, 10, "But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me to hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly." Based on the above we know that God was David's God while still in his mother's womb and that he was made to hope while still a suckling infant. David was indeed born of the Spirit at a

very early age. Due to this fact, the Spiritual birth had to be by the sovereign work of God without any human instrumentality. Remember our text says, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Thus we are all born of the Spirit in the same way that David was.

Second, we look at John the Baptist. The angel Gabriel prophesied to Zacharias concerning John in Luke 1:15, "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." Also we read in Luke 1:41, 44, "And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost...For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy." Please note that John was filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb and was filled with "joy." "Joy" is the second of the 9-fold fruit of the Spirit listed in Gal. 5:22 and its presence proves John was born again while yet in his mother's womb. John's spiritual birth had to be by the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit without any human instrumentality. Remember our text says, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In the same way that John was born of the Spirit, so are we born of the Spirit.

Third, we look at the thief on the cross. At one time both thieves were railing upon Jesus (Matt. 27:44), but something happened to one of the thieves as he hang on the cross, for we read in Luke 23:39-43, "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Certainly a fundamental change had come over this thief who went from railing on Jesus to praising him and recognizing him as Lord during the first three hours he hand on the cross. This change was not brought about by any human instrumentality, but was the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. Remember our text says, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We are born of the Spirit in the same manner that the thief on the cross was born of the Spirit.

Fourth, we read in Acts 9:1-6 about Saul of Tarsus, "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priests, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a

voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecuteth thou me? And he said, Who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecuteth: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." We can all recognize that Saul went from being the church's worst persecutor to being the church's strongest defender based on what happened to him on the Damascus road. This change in Saul's life was not brought about by human instrumentality, but by the sovereign work of a Sovereign God. Remember our text says, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Finally, in Acts 10 we read of a Gentile by the name of Cornelius. In the last part of chapter 10 we read about how Cornelius and his household and friends heard the gospel preached for the first time. However, prior to hearing the gospel we have the following evidences that Cornelius was already born of the Spirit prior to ever hearing the gospel:

- A. In verse 2 Cornelius is called a devout man.
- B. In verse 2 Cornelius is said to "fear" God.
- C. In verse 2 we find that Cornelius gave much alms to the people.
- D. In verse 2 Cornelius prayed to God always.
- E. In verse 4 we find that Cornelius' prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God.
- F. In verse 15, God said he had already cleansed Cornelius and the Gentiles with him.
- G. In verse 22, Cornelius is called a just man.

Now all the above was said of Cornelius prior to his ever hearing the gospel. By the evidences we are forced to conclude that Cornelius was born again without the use of human instrumentality, but by the sovereign work of a sovereign God. Again our text says, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Our grand conclusion must be that every one that is born of the Spirit is born of the Spirit in the same way that David, John, the thief on the cross, Saul of Tarsus, and Cornelius were. That is by the grace of God without human instrumentality. Praise be to God for what he has done for us.

Relationship Between Belief and New Birth

In this essay we will look at the relationship between belief and the new birth.

Most people today are taught and believe that you must hear and believe the gospel in order to be born again. In a cause/effect relationship, they think that "belief" is the "cause" and that the "new birth" is the "effect." This concept is to them supported by an erroneous belief in what John 3:16 teaches. In truth, the "new birth" is the "cause" and "belief" is the "effect" of the new birth.

When we are unsure what a person is teaching, it is best to go to him and let him explain what he is teaching. We will let John explain which comes first, belief or the new birth. For this we will consider several verses of scripture in the book of John as follows:

A. John 1:11-13...to them that believe on his name: which were born...of God." For the sake of brevity we didn't quote all the above passage, but please note –"believe" is in the present tense, while "were born" is in the past tense. Grammatically, therefore, the birth must precede the belief; i.e., they were born of God prior to believing.

B. John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life..." Again, "believeth" is present tense and "hath" is past tense. Thus everlasting life (new birth) precedes belief.

C. John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Once again, "heareth" and "believeth" are present tense and "hath" is past tense. Hence, everlasting life comes before we can hear or believe. Thus we must be born again prior to "hearing" or "believing." Hearing and believing are evidences of the new birth.

D. John 6:47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." You show me someone who believes on Jesus and I will show you someone who already has everlasting life.

E. John 8:43, 47, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word." "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." Clearly, you must first be of God (born again) before you can hear God's words (gospel).

F. John 10:26-28, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." In this passage the sheep are those to whom Christ gives eternal life. Those who are not given eternal life do not believe. Only those who are given eternal life

believe, thus belief is the evidence of the fact that God has given us eternal life (new birth).

G. John 13:37, 38, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" It is not the miracles we see with our natural eyes that enable or entice us to believe, but it is the miracle performed within us (new birth) that enables or causes us to believe. God must first cause us to be born again (reveal his holy arm <strength> within us) and then we can "believe the report."

H. 1 John 5:1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Once again, "believeth" is in the present tense and "is born" is in the past tense, thus again showing us that the new birth precedes belief and in this case "belief that Jesus is the Christ."

Plainly it can be seen from the several verses quoted that John taught that the new birth comes before belief. Thus the question should be asked, "What then does John 3:16 teach?" One thing it teaches us is the eternal security of the believer. Believing doesn't cause us to get eternal life, but Christ died that we may have eternal life. Since eternal life (new birth) precedes believing, then I may conclude that any person that believes already has eternal life and that Christ died for them in order that they may have eternal life.

In our next installation we will look at the evidences of the new birth.

Evidences of the New Birth

In the last several essays we have proven conclusively that God is sovereign in bringing about the new or spiritual birth in one of his children. We have shown that we are born spiritually when Christ speaks spiritual life with HIS voice into our very heart and soul.

Knowledge of God's sovereignty in causing one to be born again should cause each of us to seek the answer to a critical question: "Am I born again." If I am born again, heaven will be my eternal home and all the promises of God to his people are precious and sure to me. How can I know if I have been born again? The bible gives us several incontrovertible evidences of the new birth. If I find any one of the evidences in my life then I have conclusive proof that I have been born again. It isn't necessary to be able to identify all the evidences, any one of the evidences is sufficient to identify us as a born again child of God.

In this essay we will look at seven of the evidences of the spiritual birth. While there are several more evidences, these seven are perhaps the easiest to conclusively identify in our lives.

First, love toward the people of God is an evidence of our new birth as stated by the following verses of scripture:

A. 1 John 3:14 - "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

B. 1 John 4:7 - "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

C. 1 John 4:12 - "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

Second, doing that which is right is an evidence of our new birth as shown by the following scriptures:

A. 1 John 2:29 - "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him."

B. 1 John 2:3-5 - "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."

C. 1 John 3:7 - "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

Third, if we have ever been led by the Spirit of God we can rest assured that we have been born again as Rom. 8:14-17 teaches us, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together."

Fourth, growth in Christian virtues is an evidence of our spiritual birth. II Peter 1:5-10 proves this principle: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make

you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

Fifth, if we have felt the chastening rod of God in our lives then we are assured of our spiritual birth as the following verses prove:

A. Rev. 3:19 - "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

B. Job 5:17 - "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty."

C. Prov. 3:11, 12 - "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

D. Heb. 12:5, 6 - "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

Sixth, confessing Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an evidence of our spiritual birth as the following two passages prove:

A. 1 John 4:1-3 - "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God."

B. 1 John 4:15 - "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

Seventh, belief is an evidence of our having been born again:

A. 1 John 5:1 - "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

B. 1 John 5:9-11 - "If ye receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God

gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.

C. 1 John 5:13 - "These things have I written 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."

Thus the scriptures say "by their fruits ye shall know them. A good tree bringeth forth good fruit." We can know with assurance that we have been born again by looking at the evidence of that spiritual birth in our lives. May God be praised for his unspeakable works and for his manifold assurances toward us.