

**BORN
OF
THE
SPIRIT**

THINK ON THESE THINGS

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BORN OF THE SPIRIT

¹Now a certain man, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who was a member of the Jewish ruling council, ²came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³Jesus replied, “I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time, can he?”

⁵Jesus answered, “I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must all be born from above.’ ⁸The wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

⁹Nicodemus replied, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you don’t understand these things? ¹¹I tell you the solemn truth, we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony. ¹²If I have told you people about earthly things and you don’t believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

¹⁶For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. ¹⁸The one who believes in him is not condemned. The one who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son

of God. ¹⁹Now this is the basis for judging: that the light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does evil deeds hates the light and does not come to the light, so that their deeds will not be exposed. ²¹But the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that it may be plainly evident that his deeds have been done in God. **John 3:1-21**

Whatever questions Nicodemus had in mind when he came to Jesus by night, we can be quite confident he came in the over-ruling providence of God. As a result this story of the interview of Nicodemus with Jesus is told where ever the gospel is faithfully proclaimed, and it contains much of the Bible teaching about the birth from above.

There are some Christians who consider it to be important that we "keep it simple", without realizing that this may sometimes be done at the expense of truth. Jesus certainly did not do so, in fact He often spoke in parables and expected His hearers to think carefully about what He said, e.g. ¹Matt 13:34,35.

In considering the teaching of John 3, those who wish to "keep it simple", will need to miss out verses 3 to 13 and move straight down to verses 14-16. Here the way of salvation is made clear and plain:

For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. *John 3:16*

While the way of salvation is clear and plain, the Bible teaching on the birth from above as Jesus explained it to Nicodemus, is not simple, and we need to ponder it carefully. It will help us to do this if we try to recapture something of the original background and context. We need to know something of the Pharisees, Nicodemus, the kingdom of God and what the Bible teaches about "the flesh" or our state by nature.

The story begins with the statement, "Now a certain man, a Pharisee..." This phrase is very significant in the context of this passage because much of what Jesus said to Nicodemus involved correcting the wrong ideas of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees

The Pharisees originally served a good purpose as a party dedicated to the preservation of the Jewish religion and in particular the law. In the course of time however, their understanding and teaching came to be corrupted by man-made traditions. These traditions became an oral law which was added to the written law of Moses, and held to be above the sacred text, so that Jesus could say of them, "and they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." *Matt 15:9*

Theirs was an extreme case, but we make a great mistake if we view it as belonging only to the far distant past. We need to learn the lesson that our understanding of God's word can be distorted and our perspective "coloured" by traditions of men which creep in so easily, unintended and unsuspected. It is not a good idea to run around heresy hunting, nit picking or getting involved in point scoring debates. At the same time we need to be aware that the price of truth is constant vigilance and we should be constantly checking what we believe from the Scriptures. Our object should be to uphold the truth in a spirit of Christian charity and tolerance.

Some traditions are good and should be upheld. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast in the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle." *2 Thes 2:15*. Those traditions which cannot be sustained from the Scripture should be discarded.

The Pharisees were extremely accurate and minute in all matters pertaining to the law of Moses. They were also fastidious in observing their traditions and the external aspects of the law to the minutest detail, and often to the point of absurdity, but they neglected the essential inner aspects.

They were notorious as hypocrites and Jesus told His followers "The experts in the law and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat. Therefore pay attention to what they tell you and do it. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they teach." *Matt 23:2,3* Their teachings imposed a heavy burden on those who tried to follow them. For more details read Matthew chapter 23 and Luke 11:38-52 In short they were proud, legalistic, spiritually blind, religious exhibitionists and hypocrites, but nevertheless the religious leaders of the day.

From the very beginning of his ministry, the Pharisees showed themselves bitter and persistent enemies of our Lord. They could not bear his doctrines, and they sought by every means to destroy his influence among the people, ²Matt 12:14. In the context of John 3 their spiritual blindness is particularly significant. In Matt 23 Jesus addressed them as blind guides (verses 16, 24), fools and blind (verses 17, 19) and blind Pharisees (verse 26).

By no means all of the Pharisees were as bad as this. Gamaliel for example, was one of the wiser ones who warned his fellow council members that they should not take action against the apostles lest they be found to be acting against God, ³Acts 5:38,39. Paul, was brought up to be a Pharisee at the feet of Gamaliel and when brought before the council of Jerusalem, professed himself a Pharisee (⁴Acts 23:6-8; 26:4,5).

Nicodemus

Nicodemus was one of the more enlightened and open minded Pharisees, and a seeker after truth. He is mentioned in two other passages in John's gospel. Firstly as a member of the Sanhedrin he protested against their attitude and actions against Jesus contrary to the law, ⁵John 7:50-52. He is mentioned again as taking part in the preparation and burial of the body of Jesus, ⁶John 19:39. There can be little doubt that he later became a true disciple of Jesus, and was possibly well known amongst the early Christians.

He is described in verse 1 as a ruler of the Jews and in verse 10 as "*the teacher of Israel.*" This would indicate that he held a very senior position among the Pharisees. In many areas his thinking and perspective was typical of the Pharisees and needed correcting. In verse 7 the plural "all" shows that in this interview Jesus was speaking to him as a representative of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees believed that there would be a resurrection of the dead to eternal life. They thought that the Jews would have a part in this, on the basis of their natural birth as descendants from Abraham as well as their obedience to the law. As a Pharisee Nicodemus believed this and taught it, and therefore it is doubtful that he came to ask about the way of salvation, as understood by modern evangelical Christians.

Jesus certainly explained “the way of salvation and light” to him in verses 14 to 16 but that is not necessarily what he came to ask about. We need to consider the contemporary situation, to find the reason why he came to Jesus.

At that time in Israel, Messianic expectations were very high. It was generally believed among the Jews that Messiah would come in the power of God and deliver them from bondage to their Roman conquerors. He would set up an earthly kingdom in which Israel would have a glorious role among the nations, with Messiah as King.

This is indicated by the following passages:

While the people were listening to these things, Jesus proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. *Luke 19:11*

After His death some of His discouraged disciples on the road to Emmaus complained “But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.” *Luke 24:21* Even up until the time of His ascension His own disciples still had an excessive concern about an earthly kingdom of Israel, and He rebuked them for it. “So when they had gathered together, they began to ask him, “Lord, is this the time when you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” He told them, “You are not permitted to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.” *Acts 1:6,7*

We can therefore be reasonably confident that Nicodemus, along with the other Pharisees had the same expectation. However, in all the recorded preaching and teaching of Jesus we find that He showed no interest at all in establishing the earthly kingdom of Israel. On one occasion when He perceived that they would attempt to take Him by force and make Him a king, He departed away to a mountain. (*John 6:15*)

Nicodemus knew the prophetic Scriptures very well and therefore he understood that all the signs that Jesus did pointed to Him as the Messiah who would come in fulfillment of the Scriptures. The problem was that Jesus said nothing about the kind of kingdom which they expected. Instead, from the beginning of His earthly ministry until the day He ascended to heaven, Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God. This

was not what they expected of the Messiah, so the puzzled Nicodemus wanted to know about the kingdom of God which Jesus preached.

The Kingdom of God

The whole of Jesus' earthly ministry involved preaching the kingdom of God., "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, for that is what I was sent to do." *Luke 4:43*.

He preached the kingdom of God from the beginning to the completion of His earthly ministry, (⁸Mark 1:14; Acts 1:3). He taught, equipped and sent out His disciples to preach the kingdom of God, (⁹Luke 9:2).

In His preaching Jesus described the nature of the kingdom of God: its principles, the character (¹⁰Matt 5:7-12) and behaviour of those who are members (¹¹Matt 25:34-40), the way of entering it (John 3:15-16 above) and the folly of ignoring His teachings, (¹²Luke 6:46-49; also Matt 7:21-27).

The N.T. epistles explain the relationship between behaviour and salvation by grace through faith, (¹³Eph 2:8-10).

Present and Future kingdom of God.

There is both a present and future aspect of the kingdom of God. The future aspect is seen in such passages as "may your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." *Matt 6:10*; ¹⁴7:21-23; *Luke 19:11*; *Eph 5:5*;

Many passages have both a present and future aspect. The following passages involving the present aspect include:

- Matt 10:7.....at hand.
- Matt 12:28.....has come upon you.
- Luke 10:11.....has come near you
- Matt 18:4.....is greatest in
- Luke 17:21.....is within you
- 1 Cor 4:20.....is not in word but in power.
- Col 1:13.....Here believers, still in this life, have been "... translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love." This kingdom is both the kingdom of Christ and God.

- Mark 4:11.....In this passage the disciples were already in the kingdom in contrast to those outside.(c.f. Luke 8:10).
- Mark 12:34.....“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”
- See also Luke 18:24,25; Luke 18:16,17;Mark 10:14,15; Matt 23:13

This is the only kingdom which Jesus offered and it is “not of this world.” If it were otherwise His statement to Pilate would not have been true.

We enter the kingdom of God by repentance and faith

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, and believe the gospel. *Mark 1:14,15;*

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. *Acts 8:12;*
See also Acts 19:8; 20:24,25 with 28:31 John 3:15,16

Those who do not enter the kingdom of God in this life, will certainly not do so in the life to come.

Vs 3

Nicodemus came by night when Jesus would be away from the crowds so that there would be time for an in depth discussion. Jesus knew what was in his heart, and in direct response to his opening remarks, began the conversation with a blunt statement about our natural inability to see the kingdom of God: “unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

There are two possible ways of understanding the phrase “*see the kingdom of God.*” A simplistic view is that it is an alternative expression for going to heaven when we die. While it is certainly true that no one will go to heaven unless they have been born again, this is not necessarily what Jesus was saying to Nicodemus.

He was speaking to a representative of the Pharisees who were notoriously blind to spiritual truth. (¹⁵Matt 23:16,17,19,24,26). In verses

14,15 Jesus equates seeing with believing. In John 14:9 He says "He who has seen me has seen the Father." This refers to spiritual perception and certainly not to physical sight. Unbelief is attributed to spiritual blindness:

“For this reason they could not believe, because again Isaiah said,

“He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their heart,
so that they would not see with their eyes
and understand with their heart,
and turn to me, and I would heal them.”” *John 12:39,40*

This is a quotation from Isaiah 6:9,10. Its significance is indicated by the fact that it is quoted in all four gospels, as well as in Acts and in Romans.

In view of the above we have an overwhelming case for taking "seeing" in this passage, as referring to spiritual perception accompanied by faith. The kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom at all, as Jesus later told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" *John 18:36* and it cannot be perceived by the natural man.

Vs 4

The response which Nicodemus made is an immediate example of the way the Pharisees thought in terms of external and literal aspects of their religion, and neglected the inner aspects. He completely missed the idea of a spiritual birth from above and instead asked Jesus if one could be literally born again by the natural birth process. Jesus then enlarged upon His previous statement.

Vs 5 "I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

There are a number of interpretations of the phrase "*born of water.*" It is often linked with ¹⁶Eph 5:26, James 1:18 and 1 Peter 1:23(below) to give the meaning that the new birth takes place through the word of God. This is certainly true, but it is not necessarily what Jesus was saying here. There is also a possible link with the phrase "*washing of*

regeneration" in Titus 3:5(**below**), which points to the fact that a cleansing from sin accompanies the birth from above.

A ritualistic view links "*born of water*" with Titus 3:5 and takes it to mean that the new birth is brought about by water baptism. This would imply that the new birth takes place as a result of the will of the person baptizing, usually a priest or clergyman. Such a view is to be rejected, since the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the new birth (verse 8), and water baptism is not a condition of salvation.

Another view is that, in the Jewish idiom of the day, it referred to the natural birth which occurs with the breaking of the waters. On this basis "*born of water*" corresponds with "*born of the flesh*" in verse 6. This view is to be preferred in the context of the false belief of the Pharisees that they were the people of God as a result of their natural birth. It is necessary to be born of the Spirit as well as the natural birth, in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Vs 6 Flesh and Spirit

“What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

The teaching of verses 5 and 6 is that there are two kinds of birth. The first is the natural birth (born of water), which all mankind experience. It gives us only the sinful nature which is called the flesh. The second is a spiritual birth from above which takes place as a result of the operation of the Spirit of God. This gives us a new nature which is called spirit and it enables us to make the responses which please God. It enables us to enter the kingdom of God and live as members of that kingdom.

Those who have not been born from above do not have the nature called spirit. Even if our parents have been born of the Spirit, they cannot pass on a spiritual nature to us. This can only come to us through the birth from above by the Holy Spirit.

Vs 7 “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must all be born from above.’”

(The plural “all” indicates Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus as a

representative of the Pharisees as a group).

This was an astounding idea for Nicodemus and a lesson that the Pharisees badly needed. They thought that they were already God's own people by the natural birth and descent from Abraham. They would certainly not appreciate being told that they needed another birth, or that they needed salvation. Jesus warned them that they were not Abraham's children by their natural descent, John 8:33–44. John the Baptist gave them the same warning, ¹⁷Luke 3:8.

"Must" is a translation of the Greek word *dei* which expresses necessity or need, and is not to be taken as a command. This verse is often misunderstood as suggesting that Jesus was saying something like *"I command you all to be born again."* The Interlinear Greek/English New Testament brings out the original meaning much more clearly. *"It is needful for you to be born anew."* It is needful because of the sinfulness, perverseness, blindness, and inability and of fallen human nature.

We can only understand and appreciate how needful it is for us to be born again, when we understand what it means to be dead in trespasses and in sins. The following is a brief summary of Bible teaching concerning our state by nature:

Fallen human nature or the flesh

- It is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. ¹⁸Jer 17:9, Rom 3:10-18
- Is not subject to the law of God, and cannot be so. Those who are in the flesh are unable to please God. ¹⁹Rom 8:7,8 The inability of the flesh makes it impossible for them to live and behave as subjects in His kingdom,
- Does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. ²⁰1 Cor 2:14
- Cannot believe the gospel. John 12:39,40(above)
- Has a mind at enmity against God. The will of the flesh is not free, but limited by the sinful nature. The sinful fleshly nature is such that it cannot see the kingdom of God, nor is it able to enter the kingdom of God.

All this is described as:

“Dead in trespasses and in sins.” Eph 2:1,5

Vs 8

The Greek uses the same word "*pneuma*" for both wind and spirit, and there is a parallel here between the operation of the Holy Spirit and the wind. The wind is something which we cannot see and somewhat of a mystery which could be known only by its effects. We do not know where it comes from or where it is going. No man can command the wind to blow, or stop blowing.

There are parallels here between our natural birth and the birth from above. We did not take any action or choose to be born naturally and the same is true of the birth from above. In carrying out His work of regeneration, the Holy Spirit is sovereign. He operates when, where and however He pleases and we understand the new birth only in terms of its results.

Vs 9 "How can these things be?"

This teaching puzzled Nicodemus. From other passages of Scripture we learn that:

- The new birth takes place through the word of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:23

By his sovereign plan he gave us birth through the message of truth,. *James 1:18*

He saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, *Titus 3:5*

- The source of the new birth is the mercy of God. *Titus 3:5; ²¹Eph 2:4,5; 1 Peter 1:3*
- The Holy Spirit is completely sovereign in regeneration and He acts independently of the will of man. *John 1:13(below); John 3:8(above); ²²Rom 9:16; James 1:18*

In proclaiming the gospel how important it is to present the word of God. We should not waste our time trying to use the persuasive words of man's wisdom, tear jerking stories, or scare-mongering prophetic speculations, etc. "Let us make sure that we present the word of God

since Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” *Rom 10:17*

Vs 10 "Are you the teacher of Israel?"

This indicates that Nicodemus was a leading teacher among the Pharisees and in this situation, he should have known something of the Old Testament teaching concerning the new birth. While much of the Old Testament has to do with Israel as a nation, it also teaches us a great deal about the way God deals with His people in general. It is important for our understanding of the new birth to consider what Nicodemus should have known about it.

The new birth in the Old Testament

The Old Testament says a great deal about its cleansing aspect as well as the aspect of a new creation, spiritual enlightenment, and ability to please God. For example:

Everyone who belongs to me, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed—yes, whom I made! *Isaiah 43:7*

O Lord, you make us secure, for even all we have accomplished, you have done for us. *Isaiah 26:12*

Sprinkle me with water and I will be pure; wash me and I will be whiter than snow. *Psalms 51:7*

Create for me a pure heart! and a reliable spirit renew in my inner being.” *Psalms 51:10*

The Lord your God will also cleanse your heart and the hearts of your descendants so that you may love him with all your heart and soul and so that you may live. *Deut 30:6*

May he make us submissive, so we can follow all his instructions and obey the commandments, rules, and regulations he commanded our ancestors. *1 Kings 8:58*

“But I will make a new agreement with the whole nation of Israel after I plant them back in the land,” says the Lord. “I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts and minds. And I will be their God and they will be my people. *Jer 31:33*

Your people shall be willing in the day of your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: you have the

dew of your youth. *Psalm 110:3*

(Who said God does not interfere with man's will? Phil 2:13)

for the one bringing forth in you both the desire and the effort
—for the sake of his good pleasure—is God. *Phil 2:13*

I will lead the blind along an unfamiliar way; I will guide them
down paths they have never travelled. I will turn the darkness in
front of them into light, and level out the rough ground. This is
what I will do for them. I will not abandon them. *Isaiah 42:16*

Ezekiel 37:1-14 refers to Israel as a nation, but it also provides some
illustrations of the new birth. The dry bones represent our state by
nature, dead in trespasses and in sins. The prophet spoke the word of the
Lord to the dry bones verse 4. Life is brought about by the breath
representing the Holy Spirit.

Vs 11

Jesus refers to what He has seen and known from all eternity when
He was with the Father. The Father shows Him all things (²³John 5:20).

Vs 12,13

He had told them earthly things concerning the kingdom of God.
This would include the behaviour of those who are members of it and
the way of entering it by repentance and faith, but they did not believe
Him.

There are also heavenly things concerning the new birth, which He
did not reveal to Nicodemus and which He has not revealed to us. In
particular we cannot understand the relationship between the
unconditional sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in bringing about the new
birth (John 3:8 (below); John 1:13 (below) and the whosoever will of the
gospel (John 3:15,16(above); ²⁴Matt 11:28; Rev 22:17 etc.).

Whatever theory or explanation we devise in our minds, concerning
this relationship, it will lead to error of one kind or another, so we must
take a different and practical approach. This is taught in verse 8.

The ancients knew nothing about the nature of the wind as a gas, and
their understanding of it was entirely in terms of its effects. In the same
way our understanding of the new birth is to be in terms of its effects

and results. Our attitude should be like that of the old hymn writers:

*I am not skilled to understand
What God has willed,
What God has planned.
I only know at His right hand
stands One who is my Saviour.*

(Dora Greenwell)

*I know not why God's wondrous grace
to me He has made known,
nor why unworthy as I am,
He claimed me for His own.*

*I know not how the Spirit moves,
convincing men of sin,
revealing Jesus through the word,
creating faith in Him.*

*But I know whom I have believed,
and am persuaded that He is able
to keep that which I have committed
unto Him against that day.*

(F. L. Nathan)

Vs 14-16 Here Jesus gives a plain and clear statement of the way of salvation. He illustrates it by the incident recorded in ²⁵Num 21:4-9. God had sent the serpents among the people of Israel as a punishment for their sin. Many were bitten and died while others cried out to God for forgiveness and relief. God provided a remedy.

The Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous snake and set it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks on it, he will live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole, so that if a snake had bitten someone, when he looked to the bronze snake he lived. Num 21:8,9

When the Israelites looked to the brazen serpent it involved faith in

God for the provision He had made.

Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. *John 3:14-16*

This illustration makes the way of salvation clear and plain. It also illustrates the meaning of "*see the kingdom of God*" in verse 3, and links seeing with believing.

Results of the new birth

Our understanding of the birth from above is to be in terms of its practical effects and results. Some of these are indicated in the following passages:

1. A completely new nature

So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—look, what is new has come! *2 Cor 5:17*

- This results in a new attitude to life, new interests, and a loss of interest in the things of the world. It enables us to function as members of the kingdom of God and carry out His work on earth.
- It enables us to enter into the abundant life which Jesus promised.
“I have come so that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.” *John 10:10*
- It gives a new nature which is able to do those things which please God.
“He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves,” *Col 1:13*
- Those who have been born of God practice righteousness
If you know that he is righteous, you also know that everyone who practices righteousness has been fathered by him.
1 John 2:29
- They have been created in Christ Jesus in order to do good works. ²⁸*Eph 2:10*

- Those who practice righteousness are said to “do truth,” that is they follow the teaching of God’s word.
But the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that it may be plainly evident that his deeds have been done in God. *John 3:21*
- He keeps checking from God’s word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit that that his actions are done in accordance with the truth and in such a manner as to be well pleasing to God.

2. A new nature, which cannot continue in the practise of sin.

Knowledge of the truth sets us free from the practical power of sin over us. "... and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." *John 8:32*

If we continue in the habitual practice of sin it is an evidence that we have not been born of God at all, no matter what we profess.

Everyone who resides in him does not sin; everyone who sins has neither seen him nor known him. Little children, let no one deceive you: The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as Jesus is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed: to destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who has been fathered by God does not practice sin, because God’s seed resides in him, and thus he is not able to sin, because he has been fathered by God. *1 John 3:6-9.*

We know that everyone fathered by God does not sin, but God protects the one he has fathered, and the evil one cannot touch him. *1 John 5:18*

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: **Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!** *Gal 5:19.* See also ²⁶[Eph 5:3-6](#); [1 Cor 6:9-11](#)

3. The law of God written in the heart

“For this is the covenant that I will establish with the house of

Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and I will inscribe them on their hearts. And I will be their God and they will be my people.” *Heb 8:10*. Quoted from *Jer 31:33,34*.

Those who have been born of God “delight in the law of God according to the inward man” *Rom 7:22*. We live in a society which largely ignores God and His laws and the low moral standards of the world are creeping into the professing church. This is particularly true in the area of marriage break ups and divorce.

Those who have been born of God have a totally different attitude to that of the world around us. They honour, uphold and practice our Maker’s instructions given in the moral law. They do not do this to obtain salvation or to score any kind of merit points. On the contrary, they keep God’s commandments out of love and gratitude to Him for a full and free salvation on the grounds of the gift of Christ’s righteousness alone. (²⁷*John 14:21,23; 1 John 5:2,3*)

4. The birth from above provides for cleansing.

He saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, *Titus 3:5*

I will purify them from all the sin that they committed against me. I will forgive all their sins which they committed in rebelling against me. *Jer 33:8*

I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their bodies and I will give them a heart of flesh, so that they may obey my statutes and keep my laws and observe them. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God. *Ezek 11:19,20*

I will sprinkle you with pure water and you will be clean from all your impurities. I will purify you from all your idols. I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you; I will take the initiative and you will obey my statutes and carefully observe my laws. *Ezek 36:25-27*

Some of you once lived this way. But you were washed, you

were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. *1 Cor 6:11*

Spiritual perception

The new birth brings spiritual perception which is described in terms seeing and hearing, both of which come from God:

The ear that hears and the eye that sees—
the Lord has made them both. *Prov 20:12*

“But your eyes are blessed because they see, and your ears because they hear. *Matt 13:16*

It is necessary to hear His word in order to believe in Him:

“I tell you the solemn truth, the one who hears my message and believes the one who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned, but has crossed over from death to life. *John 5:24*

Those who are “of God” hear God’s words:

“The one who belongs to God listens and responds to God’s words. You don’t listen and respond, because you don’t belong to God.” *John 8:47*

Those who are Christ’s sheep hear His voice:

But you refuse to believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. *John 10:26,27*

Gal 3:2 and 5 refer to “the hearing of faith”:

The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? *Gal 3:2*

Does God then give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law¹¹ or by your believing what you heard? *Gal 3:5*

Faith comes when the Holy Spirit applies the word of God and restores to us the spiritual hearing we lost by the fall:

Consequently faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached word of Christ. *Rom 10:17*

Listen! I am standing at the door and knocking! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into his home and share a meal with him, and he with me. *Rev 3:20*

This passage is part of a message given to the church at Laodicea. It

is addressed to individuals: “*If anyone...*”, and has a universal application both to the converted and to the unconverted. How gracious it is of the Lord to stand at the door and keep on knocking—seeking to maintain fellowship with His people. ²⁸Rev 2:4; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor 1:9; John 4:23; ¹⁶14:21,23

There is also always the danger of growing cold and hard hearted:

“O, that today you would listen as he speaks! Do not harden your hearts.” Heb 4:7

It is the responsibility of all mankind to listen for His voice:

“This is my one dear Son, in whom I take great delight. Listen to him!” Matt 17:5

In the case of the unconverted, the passage clearly proclaims the “whosoever will” of the gospel. However, it is often quoted without due regard to the very significant phrase, “*if any man hears my voice.*” It should also be noted that the person behind the door is unable to hear His voice because he is dead in trespasses and in sins. No one can hear His voice, in this sense, without regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Thus this picture of the Lord so graciously knocking at the heart’s door, proclaims human responsibility and the whosoever will of the gospel together with the sovereignty of God in salvation.

The new birth also brings spiritual light

For God, who said “*Let light shine out of darkness,*” is the one who shined in our hearts to give us the light of the glorious knowledge of God in the face of Christ. 2 Cor 4:6

to open their eyes so that they turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ Acts 26:18

But just as it is written, “***Things that no eye has seen, or ear heard, or mind imagined, are the things God has prepared for those who love him.***” God has revealed these to us by the Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the things of a man except the man’s spirit within him? So too, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God. And we

speaking about these things, not with words taught us by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. *1 Cor 2:9-13*

Note that this is for the present life as well as for the life to come.

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us insight to know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This one is the true God and eternal life.

1 John 5:20

Our thought life is a very essential part of the new life in Christ and the abundant life which He promised. It is made possible only through the spiritual perception which we have as a result of the new birth. It is sustained by feeding upon God's word, prayer, meditation, worship, thanksgiving and fellowship with other Christians. It is a kind of life which the world knows nothing of and cares nothing about.

As we think so we are in practice. Our spiritual thought life has its practical outworking in functioning as members of the kingdom of God and doing His work on earth.

"By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be"

Love, faith and justification

Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been fathered by God and knows God. *1 John 4:7*

Everyone that believes that Jesus is the Christ, has been begotten of God; and everyone that loves him that begat, loves also him that has been begotten of him. *1 John 5:1* (from a literal translation)

Justification follows from faith when God imputes the righteousness of Christ to those who believe in Him. He then justifies or declares the believing sinner to be righteous.

Justification is God's pronouncement from His throne in heaven and no one can ever reverse it. It should be noted that while we cannot have one without the other, the new birth and justification are two different aspects of salvation. Justification takes place from the throne in heaven while the new birth takes place in the believer here on earth.

Adoption into the family of God

He came to what was his own, but his own people did not receive him. But to all who have received him—those who believe in his name—he has given the right to become God’s children—children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband’s decision, but by God. *John 1:11-13*

His own people, the Jews, did not receive Him because they did not want the spiritual kingdom, which He offered them. They loved darkness rather than light. “*But to all who have received him*”; this points to the whoever will of the gospel.

Receiving Him involves a number of very definite acts of the will including acceptance, trust, reliance upon Him, commitment, love and obedience. These however are not acts of the will of the flesh but acts of a will that has been set free from bondage to the sinful nature by the birth from above. Those who receive Him do so having been born “children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband’s decision, but by God.” *John 1:13*

To those who receive Him He gives the authority, right or privilege to become the children of God. This is the great gospel truth of adoption, ²⁹*Gal 4:5; 3:26; Eph 1:5; Rom 8:14-17*. It takes place by the authority of God on the throne in heaven—“*authority that flows from His throne unto His own.*”

While we cannot have one without the other, adoption and the new birth are two different aspects of salvation. J.I.Packer writes: “*Adoption is the bestowal of a relationship, while regeneration is the transformation of our moral nature.*”

Adoption takes place in heaven, while the new birth takes place here on earth. Adoption takes place as a result of man’s free choice, but the new birth is a sovereign act of the Holy Spirit independent of the will of man, *John 1:13(above); John 3:8(above)*.

The awesome privilege of adoption calls for our wonder, thanksgiving and worship:

(See what sort of love the Father has given to us: that we should be called God’s children—and indeed we are! For this reason the world does not know us: because it did not know him. Dear friends, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has

not yet been revealed. We know that whenever it is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is. And everyone who has this hope focused on him purifies himself, just as Jesus is pure). ¹ John 3:1-3

EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH

The Bible gives a number of characteristics of those who have been born of God. These are in no way requirements or conditions we must meet in order to be born again. They are the results of God's work of grace alone, ³⁰Eph 2:5. They are also our responsibility, ³¹2 Peter 1:5-11.

One who has been born of God :

- Loves other Christians ³²1 John 3:14; 4:7
- Believes that Jesus is the Christ ³³1 John 5:1
- Heeds the warnings of the gospel. ³⁴Rom 8:13; 1 Cor 6:9,10; Gal 5:19-21; ²⁹Eph 5:3-7
- Practises righteousness. ³⁵1 John 2:29
- Overcomes the world through faith in Christ. ³⁶1 John 5:4,5
- Has the law of God in the mind and in the heart. Heb 8:10(above); ³⁷Heb10:16
- Delights in the law of God. ³⁸Rom 7:22; Ps 1:1,2
- Hates sin. ³⁹Rom 7:15,24
- Has a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. ⁴⁰1 Peter 1:3,4

HAVE YOU BEEN BORN AGAIN?

THE OFFER OF AN EARTHLY KINGDOM THEORY

There are many godly evangelical Christians who believe that during His earthly ministry, our Lord Jesus Christ offered to set up an earthly kingdom. However they do not realize the implications of this teaching and when these are brought to their attention they usually reject it out of hand.

Firstly it should be noted that the theory involves the same accusation that His enemies brought against Him before Pilate. *"If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."* John 19:12

While Pilate had little regard or concern for truth, he had every reason to treat even an obviously false accusation very seriously. It was his job as the representative of Caesar to put down any hint of rebellion, and deal very ruthlessly and drastically with any would be (political) king of the Jews. His own life depended upon it, so we could hardly find a better witness regarding this accusation than Pilate. Yet after examining Jesus, he made the statement, *"I find no fault in Him at all."* John 18:38; 19:4; 19:6

Each of the gospel writers record the fact that Pilate did not believe this lying accusation. Both Luke and John state it three times. This indicates how important the gospel writers considered it to stress the fact that Pilate did not believe that Jesus offered to set up an earthly kingdom. His decision to hand Jesus over to be crucified was pragmatic and certainly not on the ground of truth.

How sad it is to think that some of His friends put forward a theory which contains the same false accusation as His enemies made against Him.

If Jesus had offered to set up an earthly kingdom :

- He would have been offering to act contrary to God's eternal purpose.
- It would involve turning away from the cross, and thus the suggestion that the atonement was unnecessary and God could have saved people on some other basis.

- He would have been telling an evasive lie when He told Pilate *"My kingdom is not of this world."* John 18:36

Since the only possible way of forgiveness of sin is through the cross which would now not take place, there would be no possibility of salvation for anyone. Such a kingdom is impossible for unregenerate mankind.

Suppose that the Jews had accepted Him as their king. He would then reign over a people who were still dead in trespasses and in sins and totally unable to obey God or please Him. It is impossible to have such a kingdom without the willing obedience of its subjects. Those who hold this theory certainly do not understand the doctrine of the fall.

The offer of the kingdom theory carries insinuations which strike at the very foundations of the Christian faith.

Scriptures – “from the New English Translation”

- 1 **Matt 13:34** Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the crowds; he did not speak to them without a parable. **13:35** This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet:
*“I will open my mouth in parables,
I will announce what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.”*
- 2 **Matt 12:14** But the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, as to how they could assassinate him.
- 3 **Acts 5:38** So in this case I say to you, stay away from these men and leave them alone, because if this plan or this undertaking originates with people, it will come to nothing, **5:39** but if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them, or you may even be found fighting against God.” He convinced them,
- 4 **Acts 23:6** Then when Paul noticed that part of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, he shouted out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead!” **23:7** When he said this, an argument began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. **23:8** (For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)
26:4 Now all the Jews know the way I lived from my youth, spending my life from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. **26:5** They know, because they have known me from time past, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.
- 5 **John 7:50** Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before and who was one of the rulers, said, **7:51** “Our law doesn’t condemn a man unless it first hears from him and learns what he is doing, does it?” **7:52** They replied, “You aren’t from Galilee too, are you? Investigate carefully and you will see that no prophet comes from Galilee!”
- 6 **John 19:39** Nicodemus, the man who had previously come to Jesus at night, accompanied Joseph, carrying a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about seventy-five pounds.
- 7 **John 6:15** Then Jesus, because he knew they were going to come and seize him by force to make him king, withdrew again up the mountainside alone.
- 8 **Mark 1:14** Now after John was imprisoned, Jesus went into Galilee and proclaimed the gospel of God. **1:15** He said, “The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the gospel!”
Acts 1:3 To the same apostles also, after his suffering, he presented himself alive with many convincing proofs. He was seen by them over a forty-day period and spoke about matters concerning the kingdom of God.

Scriptures – “from the New English Translation”

- 9 **Luke 9:2** and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.
- 10 **Matt 5:7** “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.
5:10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.
5:11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of me. **5:12** Rejoice and be glad because your reward is great in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.
- 11 **Matt 25:34** Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. **25:35** For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, **25:36** I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ **25:37** Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? **25:38** When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or naked and clothe you? **25:39** When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ **25:40** And the king will answer them, ‘I tell you the truth, just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it for me.’
- 12 **Luke 6:46** “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do what I tell you?
6:47 “Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and puts them into practice—I will show you what he is like: **6:48** He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep, and laid the foundation on bedrock. When a flood came, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. **6:49** But the person who hears and does not put my words into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against that house, it collapsed immediately, and was utterly destroyed!”
- 13 **Eph 2:8** For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; **2:9** it is not from works, so that no one can boast. **2:10** For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them.
- 14 **Matt 7:21** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven—only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.
7:22 On that day, many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in

Scriptures – “from the New English Translation”

your name, and in your name cast out demons and do many powerful deeds?’ **7:23** Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Go away from me, you lawbreakers!’

Luke 19:11 While the people were listening to these things, Jesus proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.

Eph 5:5 For you can be confident of this one thing: that no person who is immoral, impure, or greedy (such a person is an idolater) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

15 Matt 23:16 “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple is bound by nothing. But whoever swears by the gold of the temple is bound by the oath.’ **23:17** Blind fools! Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold sacred?

23:19 You are blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

23:24 Blind guides! You strain out a gnat yet swallow a camel!

23:26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside may become clean too!

16 Eph 5:26 to sanctify her by cleansing her with the washing of the water by the word,

James 1:18 By his sovereign plan he gave us birth through the message of truth, that we would be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

17 Luke 3:8 Therefore produce fruit that proves your repentance, and don’t begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones!

18 Jer 17:9 The human mind is more deceitful than anything else. It is incurably bad. Who can understand it?

Rom 3:10-18 just as it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one,

3:11 there is no one who understands,

there is no one who seeks God.

*3:12 All have turned away,
together they have become worthless;*

there is no one who shows kindness, not even one.”

*3:13 “Their throats are open graves,
they deceive with their tongues,*

the poison of asps is under their lips.”

3:14 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

3:15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood,

3:16 ruin and misery are in their paths,

3:17 and the way of peace they have not known.”

Scriptures – “from the New English Translation”

3:18 “*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*”

- 19 Rom 8:7** because the outlook of the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to the law of God, nor is it able to do so. **8:8** Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
- 20 1 Cor 2:14** The unbeliever does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- 21 Eph 2:4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, **2:5** even though we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you are saved!
- 1 Peter 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- 22 Rom 9:16** So then, it does not depend on human desire or exertion, but on God who shows mercy.
- James 1:18** By his sovereign plan he gave us birth through the message of truth, that we would be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.
- 23 John 5:20** For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does, and will show him greater deeds than these, so that you will be amazed.
- 24 Matt 11:28** Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
- Rev 22:17** And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say: “Come!” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wants it take the water of life free of charge.
- 25 Num 21:4** Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became impatient along the way. **21:5** And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no bread or water, and we detest this worthless bread.”
- 21:6** So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people, and they bit the people; many people of Israel died. **21:7** Then the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord that he take away the snakes from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.
- 21:8** The Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous snake and set it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks on it, he will live.” **21:9** So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole, so that if a snake had bitten someone, when he looked to the bronze snake he lived.
- 26 Eph 5:3** But among you there must not be either sexual immorality, impurity of any kind, or greed, as these are not fitting for the saints. **5:4**

Scriptures – “from the New English Translation”

Neither should there be vulgar speech, foolish talk, or coarse jesting—all of which are out of character—but rather thanksgiving. **5:5** For you can be confident of this one thing: that no person who is immoral, impure, or greedy (such a person is an idolater) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

5:6 Let nobody deceive you with empty words, for because of these things God’s wrath comes on the sons of disobedience. **5:7** Therefore do not be partakers with them,

1 Cor 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals, **6:10** thieves, the greedy, drunkards, the verbally abusive, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. **6:11** Some of you once lived this way. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

27 John 14:21 The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him.”

14:23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and take up residence with him.

1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God: whenever we love God and obey his commandments. **5:3** For this is the love of God: that we keep his commandments. And his commandments do not weigh us down,

28 Rev 2:4 But I have this against you: You have departed from your first love!

1 John 1:3 What we have seen and heard we announce to you too, so that you may have fellowship with us (and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ).

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into fellowship with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

John 4:23 But a time is coming—and now is here—when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such people to be his worshipers.

29 Gal 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we may be adopted as sons with full rights.

Gal 3:26 For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith.

Eph 1:5 He did this by predestining us to adoption as his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure of his will

Rom 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. **8:15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery leading again to fear, but you

Scriptures – “from the New English Translation”

- received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, “Abba, Father.” **8:16** The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God’s children. **8:17** And if children, then heirs (namely, heirs of God and also fellow heirs with Christ)—if indeed we suffer with him so we may also be glorified with him.
- 30 Eph 2:5** even though we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you are saved!
- 31 2 Peter 1:5** For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith excellence, to excellence, knowledge;
- 32 1 John 3:14** We know that we have crossed over from death to life because we love our fellow Christians. The one who does not love remains in death. **4:7** Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been fathered by God and knows God.
- 33 1 John 5:1** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ¹ has been fathered by God, and everyone who loves the father loves the child fathered by him.
- 34 Rom 8:13** (for if you live according to the flesh, you will die), but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. **1 Cor 6:9** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, passive homosexual partners, practising homosexuals, **6:10** thieves, the greedy, drunkards, the verbally abusive, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. **Gal 5:19** Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, **5:20** idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, **5:21** envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!
- 35 1 John 2:29** If you know that he is righteous, you also know that everyone who practices righteousness has been fathered by him.
- 36 1 John 5:4** because everyone who has been fathered by God conquers the world. This is the conquering power that has conquered the world: our faith. **5:5** Now who is the person who has conquered the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- 37 Heb 10:16** “*This is the covenant that I will establish with them after those days, says the Lord. I will put my laws on their hearts and I will inscribe them on their minds,*”
- 38 Rom 7:22** For I delight in the law of God in my inner being. **Ps 1:1** How happy is the one who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners,

Scriptures – “from the New English Translation”

or sit in the assembly of arrogant fools!

1:2 Instead he finds pleasure in obeying the Lord’s commands;
he intently studies his commands day and night.

39 Rom 7:15 For I don’t understand what I am doing. For I do not do what I want—instead, I do what I hate.

7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

40 1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **1:4** that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. It is reserved in heaven for you,