

Message #75 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Born Again - Becoming A Spiritual Being"

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about being born-again. Born-again is a concept of the Bible which was established by Jesus himself when he spoke in John 3:1-8, saying to Nicodemus that unless a man was both born of water and of the Spirit, he could not see the kingdom of heaven. In verse six of that chapter Jesus says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Of course, this is not a new concept to you, or at least, it shouldn't be if you are a Christian. If you're a Christian, a true one, then you have been born again, and have become a spirit person instead of a flesh and blood person.

Every person born on this earth is a flesh and blood person at first. But this world is only a stepping stone for heaven. At least, it can be a stepping stone to heaven if a person accepts God's offer of a way into that heavenly kingdom. We know that Jesus Christ is the way into heaven, and that by his blood on the cross of Calvary we can be accepted into the presence of God. However, if we don't accept Jesus Christ as Savior, then we won't be accepted into the presence of God, for we will not have met the requirements which God has established.

This world is just a portal through which we pass in order to reach heaven. Some people think it is a place for us to vacation until such time as God sends Jesus to get us and take us home. But this world is not a vacation experience, except in the sense of some very bad vacation experiences that some of you may have experienced in your lifetime. But this earthly experience is a journey of traveling through this earth, in order to reach your desired destination. For Christians, as least for true honest-to-goodness Christians, the destination is the kingdom of

heaven. But in heaven there are no beings that are human. Human beings have bodies that are made of flesh and blood. Their life is in the blood, and the life that their blood allows is a life of flesh. Human beings live when their blood circulates through their fleshly bodies and thereby distributes the nutrients that the body needs. When we are first born on this earth, we are born as human beings, beings which have flesh and blood as the body substance.

But, when we're born-again in Spirit, we cease to be just human beings. When we accept Jesus Christ as Savior, we go through a rebirth experience which changes who we really are. No, this doesn't mean that we immediately disappear and become spirits, but it means that a spiritual awakening takes place by which we come into the knowledge of spiritual things in a much more personal way than we ever did before.

When a person is born-again by the Spirit of God, something takes place within our soul which changes us inwardly. Of course the process is not complete yet, and won't be complete until that day that Jesus Christ returns in the clouds of heaven. At that point we will lose our bodies of flesh and blood, for our flesh and blood bodies will be transformed. They will be changed into bodies which are no longer flesh and blood. At that time our bodies will still be recognizable, but will no longer have the element of sin, for the sin nature can only dwell in human beings, and not beings which have been born from the Holy Spirit of God. Sin will have been destroyed when our bodies of flesh and blood have been changed into bodies which only exist in a state of righteousness, bodies that cannot co-exist with sin.

And this is the essence of what takes place when you are born-again. Although a born-again person is still locked in a flesh and blood body until the day of Christ's return, our souls have been renewed with the word of God. When we accept the truth of Jesus Christ being God, and that his death on the cross frees us from our debt of sin, we, in essence, have opened up our soul to the Holy Spirit of God. We have opened up our soul to allow God's Holy Spirit to begin to move us to words and deeds of righteousness. Being born-again in Spirit is a decision of the heart of man, the very soul of man, the very core of man.

The soul of man is the center of his intellect. The soul of man is where the beliefs and convictions of man lie. The soul of man is who the man really is. God's Holy Spirit cannot move a man to words or actions of righteousness unless the man's soul is in accord with God's soul. Unless man's heart is truly conformed to the heart of God, God's Holy Spirit cannot gain access to him. And if the Holy Spirit cannot gain access to him, then the same Holy Spirit of God cannot move the man to words and actions which conform to godliness. When a man is born-again in Spirit, it is a change which takes place within the mind of man, the very heart of man. It is a change in the actual thoughts of man, in the absolute deep-down beliefs and convictions of man concerning good and evil. When a man is born-again he comes to an awareness that the essence of God is goodness, and that the essence of anything outside of the realm of God is evil. Up until this time, man is ignorant of the difference between good and evil, for he has lived in a state of mind which cannot perceive that God alone is good. His flesh and blood humanness has thought that God is good and the things of the flesh are good also. When

man finally realizes his own sinfulness, and truly desires the righteousness of God, then, and only then, does a man become born-again. He has changed his mind concerning his direction. He has changed courses. Instead of settling into this world and becoming comfortable with the things which stimulate his flesh and blood humanness, man turns himself away from the evil he has recognized, and begins to pursue the goodness of God, for the things of God have increased in importance to him, and he has made a determination to seek God.

It is this pursuit of the righteousness of God which proves that the born-again experience has actually taken place. It is called being born of the Spirit because it is only when man's heart changes in its attitude toward God that God's Holy Spirit can have access to him, and then take that man into the realm of God. When a man's heart changes in attitude, and he truly desires the things of God, then God's Holy Spirit can search his heart and find the thoughts and convictions of God, and will then move his body to display these beliefs and convictions outwardly. The man, who had previously been unable to comprehend the spiritual things of God has now been ushered into the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven, which is a spiritual kingdom. He has become born-again in spirit.

The Holy Spirit of God is a liaison between the soul and the body. The Holy Spirit of God is a bridge. It spans the gap between the soul and the body. The body does not control its own actions or words. It is the soul of man, the heart of man, the mind of man, his intellectual portion, his thought portion, which determines how his body acts and speaks. The soul of man cannot be seen. It is the body which can be seen. God the Father cannot be seen, except as he manifests himself, which means to outwardly show himself. He manifested himself on this earth through the form of his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was God in the flesh, yet he was still God. Jesus was the body aspect of God, a body which could further reveal God the Father to a world of human beings. When human beings saw Jesus Christ on this earth they were seeing the outward manifestation of God's soul. God is a spirit, but when Jesus Christ appeared on this earth, God was finally revealed to the physical eyes of humans.

You see, God's soul can only be seen by humans when it is shown outwardly by the body of Christ, just as your own soul cannot be seen by other humans unless it is shown outwardly by your body. It is the body which is comprehended by the eyes of man. The body is not the life of the man, not the mind of man, not the heart of the man. The body is the outward demonstration, the outward physical representation, of the man's thoughts, beliefs, and convictions. The body reveals the deep hidden things of the man's soul.

When a man is born-again, his thoughts change. He becomes open and desirous of the things of God, thereby allowing the Holy Spirit to come in and find a sure footing from which to work in his life. A true born-again experience is when a man receives the true word of God for himself. It is when the word of God, the promises of God, the revelations of God, become real to the man and he receives them in his heart. The actual re-birthing into a spirit being instead of a human being is by the word of God taking over the heart of the man. Man then becomes a spirit being because the spiritual things of God can now hold sway over the lustful desires of the flesh. Yes,

man still has the flesh to contend with, but he is no longer a man who desires to be subject to the flesh. Now his mind has changed. He has changed in his own soul. He wants those things of God, and his sight is diverted from the things of this world and he begins to focus on things above.

Take a look at Colossians 3:1-3. It says, “If you, then, are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” You see, if you allow God to permeate your mind and change it, so that you no longer desire the things of this world, then his Spirit can come into you and live. And Jesus further explains that both he and the Father will come in and live with you. And God's Spirit will find in your heart the precepts and promises of God, and therefore will begin to move your body into conformation with those things. But until your heart changes, you will be unable to be a spiritual person who can understand and apply spiritual things. But when your heart does change, then you are able to come into the realm of the spiritual Kingdom of God and begin your journey of coming out of the earthly kingdom of Satan.

You know, I doubt that most people realize that this world is the temporary kingdom of Satan, and that our lives here on earth are so entwined with the lies of this earthly king. Satan has convinced the people of earth that earth is not all that bad a place to live. Many people actually desire to live forever in their fleshly form. They believe that flesh and blood is good, and that the desires of this human body are sufficient, that the stimulations of the flesh for delicious food, inordinate affection, illicit sex, stylish clothes, stylish cars, stylish homes, and all kinds of hobbies and crafts are the joys worth living for. Even Christians are prone to these kinds of thoughts, and Satan's deception keeps most of the people of earth from comprehending the heavenly things of God. Many people even doubt that God even exists. But a man who finally accepts God's revealed truth in exchange for the things of this world, has become born-again, and now instead of blood being the life of the man, the Spirit of God is life, for it ushers man into a whole new existence which cannot even be seen with human eyes.

Until you see the realm of God's spiritual kingdom, you are just a flesh and blood human being. When you finally see into the spiritual realm of God, and accept the divine influence of God into your heart, you cease to be just a human being. That flesh and blood person that you used to be is put to death. No, not physically, but spiritually, in that the desire of the flesh no longer determines your goals. It is now a desire for heavenly things which determines your goals. You have changed your focus. You have taken your eyes away from the desires of this world, and have focused them on the kingdom of heaven. This is a whole new perspective. It is an inward change of your heart and mind, which causes an outward change of your words and actions. Yes, you will still have the body of flesh to contend with, which will entice you with worldly desire. But, if your heart has truly been changed, and you hold fast to your convictions of God's truth, God's Spirit will bring you to victory in your battle against the flesh.

However, we must also consider the alternative. Just because you have been born-again, does not mean that you are home free. Because this born-again experience takes place in your mind by accepting the truth of God for yourself and by rejecting the lies of Satan, you can still become just a human being again if you cast off the truth that you have just received. And Satan knows this. That is why he doesn't give up. Because although you have come into the spiritual realm of God by renewing your mind with the truth, you can also leave the spiritual realm of God by renewing your mind with the lies. John 8:32 tells us that the truth will set us free. But it is also true that the lies of Satan will bring you into bondage.

Many of today's Christians think that once they have been born-again they will no longer be subject to losing their salvation. But losing the born-again experience is easy. If you become born-again by rejecting the lies and accepting the truth, then what do you suppose will happen to you if you turn back from the truth and once again embrace the lies? The born-again experience only took place because you accepted the truth of God. If you exchange the truth of God for the lies of Satan, that new man, that new spiritual man, dies. That new spiritual man cannot live if the Holy Spirit of God finds no place to dwell within you. If the Holy Spirit can find no desire for righteousness in your heart, but only finds a desire for evil, then it cannot move you toward words or actions of righteousness. The born-again experience only brings life in the spirit if the truth of God remains in your heart.

I'd like to read to you Genesis 8:6-12 concerning the flood. But as I read, please keep in mind that the dove is seen in scripture as representative of the Holy Spirit. Here goes. It says, "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: 7 And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from the earth. 8 Also he sent forth a dove, to see if the waters were abated from the face of the ground; 9 But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and drew her to him into the ark. 10 And he stayed yet another seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 11 And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from the earth. 12 And he stayed yet another seven days; and sent forth the dove; which did not return again to him any more."

Now, without getting into really deep symbolic description, just think about the concept of the dove not being able to find a place to land on the earth because the waters still covered the ground. In scripture we know that the lies of Satan are referred to as waters which will rise up and drown us. It is referred to in scripture as drowning in the sea of destruction. When the waters of lies come into your heart in sufficient amounts, there will be no place for the truth of God to stand. Just as the dove was hindered in finding a place on the earth because of the flood waters, God's spirit will be hindered in finding a place in our hearts when the lies of Satan overwhelm us. And when we subject ourselves to more and more of his lies, we are ensuring that the Holy Spirit will be quenched in our hearts.

Sometimes, as Christians, we forget that lies will quench the truth. We sometimes have this idea that we can allow lots of lies to enter into us and still keep all the truth of God pure. That's an impossibility. The only thing that destroys truth is the lie. And, if we allow lies to permeate our minds, how can the truth stand in purity? Can you imagine what heaven would be like if the lies of Satan were allowed into it? Can you imagine living in heaven and not being able to comprehend the fullness of God because the lies were still getting in the way?

So, if you're born-again, and have rejected the lies of Satan and accepted the truth of God, then why are you constantly filling your mind with junk? Why do you allow Satan to have such open access to you? The Bible says in Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Once we renew our minds, then we need to guard them from the lies of Satan. No, we can't completely prevent all lies from entering our minds, for Satan is still allowed to work to a certain extent. However, we can prevent our minds from being overwhelmed with earthly concepts and principles which will erode the truth in our hearts and which will destroy the ability of God's Holy Spirit to work through us.

In short, Christians, if you are allowing your minds to be stimulated just a little bit by the things of God, but quite extensively by the things of this world, then you are subjecting yourselves to the danger of quenching the Holy Spirit. There are many people who call themselves Christians and make claims to being children of God but show very little evidence of an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ. Too many times it is the television that wins out instead of the Bible. Too many times it is hobbies, sports, or other interests that replace the gathering of ourselves together. Too many times it is the newspaper or secular magazines or secular books which permeate our minds instead of a study of God's word.

No, I'm not saying that you can't do anything except read your Bible and pray. But I am saying that you can't allow a lot of the world and a little of God, and still expect to be born-again. In order to be born again in spirit, you must change your heart. However, in order to remain born again in spirit, you must guard your heart as well. You see, it is the truth which will set you free. However, it is also the truth which will keep you free.