

## ***SPIRITUAL BIRTH***

### **1. Spiritual birth includes several synonymous concepts.**

- a. Becoming God's sons and daughters (Jn 1:12; 2 Co 6:18; Ga 3:26; 1 Jn 3:2).
- b. Being born of God (Jn 1:13; 1 Jn 5:1).
- c. Being born again/anew/from above (Jn 3:3, 7; 1 Pe 1:3, 23).
- d. Being born of the Spirit (Jn 3:5-6, 8).
- e. Becoming a new creation (2 Co 5:17; Ga 6:15).
- f. Being made alive (Eph 2:5; Col 2:13).
- g. Regeneration (Ti 3:5).
- h. Quotes:
  - (1) "To be born anew by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit into a relationship in which God the First Person becomes a legitimate Father and the saved one becomes a legitimate child, is a position which is but dimly apprehended by any human being in this world. ... This birth from above accomplishes a measureless transformation. To be born into an earthly home of outstanding character is of great advantage, but to be born of God with every right and title belonging to that position—an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ—passes the range of human understanding."<sup>1</sup>

### **2. Spiritual birth is necessary because we begin spiritually dead.**

- a. Since the fall, every human being is physically alive but spiritually dead (Ge 2:17; Eph 2:1, 5).
- b. We all need spiritual birth for our relationship with God to be restored and to be able to fulfil our original purpose as human beings.
- c. It is difficult to communicate to physically alive human beings that they are in fact spiritually dead (Jn 3:4, 9). People do not like to be told they are spiritually dead, especially if they feel spiritual or adhere to a religion. But it doesn't matter. According to God's special revelation, they are spiritually dead.

### **3. Jesus' death and resurrection is what makes our spiritual birth possible.**

- a. God sent his only-begotten Son, Jesus, to save us and give us spiritual life (Jn 3:16). Jesus' blood atonement is what makes our spiritual birth possible (Jn 3:14-15). Without it, we could not be born again (Jn 3:3).

### **4. In the *ordo salutis*, faith precedes spiritual birth, not vice versa.**

- a. John 3 clearly shows faith is the one prerequisite for spiritual birth. Through God's grace unbelievers are able to believe the gospel message.
- b. It is through believing the gospel message that we are born again (1 Pe 1:23-25). Faith in Jesus is the only requirement (Jn 1:12). Everyone who believes in Jesus is immediately born of God and becomes a child of God, without exception (Jn 1:12-13).
- c. We are to preach the gospel so that more and more people might be born again (1 Pe 1:25). The goal of evangelism is a person's spiritual birth.

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<sup>1</sup> L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 3:241.

**5. Conversely, one cannot be born of God apart from believing in Jesus.**

- a. If one does not believe in Jesus, one is neither born of God nor a child of God (Jn 1:12-13). One may believe in the spiritual realm and practice religious rituals that make one feel spiritual (Ex 7:11; 1 Ki 18:26). But until one believes in Jesus, one is not spiritual in any positive sense.
- b. Until we are born again, we have no spiritual capacity to relate to God (1 Co 2:14).
- c. This is where mindfulness and yoga fail.

**6. Spiritual birth differs from physical birth (Jn 1:13; 3:4, 6).**

- a. Physical birth is visible, but spiritual birth is invisible, like the wind (Jn 3:8).
- b. Spiritual birth may or may not be accompanied by outward signs of emotion.
- c. We have no say in our natural birth, but we do have a say in our spiritual birth. We get to decide whether to believe in God's Son (Jn 3:18, 36). Spiritual birth involves our volition.

**7. Spiritual birth happens via two invisible baptisms (Jn 3:5, 8).**

- a. These baptisms are simultaneous at the moment of faith but follow a logical order (Ac 19:2-5). John the Baptist led invisible water baptism; Jesus led invisible Spirit baptism (Mt 3:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 1:5; 11:16; 19:2-5).
- b. Invisible water baptism comes first.
  - (1) John's physical water baptism meant nothing unless an invisible change of heart was involved (Mt 3:2, 6-8; Ac 19:4).
  - (2) Every believer is invisibly cleansed at the moment of faith in Jesus (1 Co 6:11; Eph 5:26; Ti 3:5).
  - (3) This invisible cleansing is not the removal of physical dirt from physical flesh (Mt 23:25-26; 1 Pe 3:21).
  - (4) Visible water baptism publicly signifies invisible cleansing is occurring or has already occurred (Mt 3:6; Ac 10:47; 22:16). See *Water Baptism*.
- c. Spirit baptism comes second.
  - (1) Every believer is baptised by the Spirit into the body of Messiah at the moment of faith (1 Co 12:13; Ga 3:27). As a result of this Spirit baptism, every believer is "in Messiah" forever (Eph 1:3-14). See *Spirit Baptism*.
- d. As unbelievers, our bodies are dirty with sin. They must be cleansed through invisible water baptism in order for the Spirit to indwell permanently (1 Co 6:19).

**8. Spiritual birth is necessary for us to enter the Messianic kingdom (Jn 3:3, 5).**

- a. To participate in the New covenant (Eze 36:25-27; Ac 2:38), we must be born again.
- b. We must be like Isaac, born of the free woman through promise (Ga 4:24-28). The heavenly Jerusalem, not the earthly Jerusalem, must be our mother (Ga 4:26). See *New Covenant*.

**9. Believers cannot be spiritually unborn.**

- a. We are born of imperishable seed (1 Pe 1:23), and God's seed abides in us (1 Jn 3:9). We who have been born of God are guaranteed to overcome the world in an ultimate

sense (1 Jn 5:4). Jesus protects us, and Satan cannot ultimately touch us (1 Jn 5:18). See *Eternal Security*.

**10. Practicing righteousness is one indication we have been born of God (1 Jn 2:29).**

- a. Note it is possible for a believer to be eternally secure and yet not have assurance of that security. Eternal security differs from assurance of salvation. See *Good Works* and *Assurance of Salvation*.

**11. Spiritual birth is just the beginning.**

- a. To fulfil Jesus' command to love one another (Jn 13:34; 15:12; 1 Jn 3:11), we must be born of God in phase one and come to know God in phase two (1 Jn 4:7). See *Knowing God* and *Love*.

**12. Application.**

- a. Be confident in your own spiritual birth as a believer. Treasure your eternal security.
- b. Inform your loved ones they must be born again to have eternal life and enter God's kingdom. Insist on it.
- c. Inform religious people they must be born again. Feeling spiritual does not mean one is spiritual in any positive sense. Practicing mindfulness or yoga, or watching Oprah, isn't the answer.
- d. Spiritual birth without Jesus' atonement is absolutely impossible. Remember, Christianity is a bloody worldview.