

(I) The Gospel of God's Great love - Part 11 (You must Be Born Again)

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God created man as a tripartite being. This simply means that man is a spirit that lives in the body making him/her a living soul. The body has its contact in the physical world, but the spirit gives us contact with the spiritual world. When a person is born they are spiritually dead. This means that we are born separated from God's Holy Spirit. This is man's primary problem. This is why man cannot rightly reflect God's nature. Man can be taught to keep God's law with consequences of disobedience in view, but that is not the same as doing them by nature. Again, this problem can be traced to the Garden of Eden when Sin entered the world. This is a spiritual problem.

The lampstand of the human spirit

There is a wonderful illustration of this from the book of Proverbs where we read, "The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, Searching all his innermost parts." (Proverbs 20:27) You will notice that the passage did not say that the spirit of man is the 'light' of the Lord. This is because the spirit of man is the lamp stand itself; it is not the fire. It is the place from which man is connected with the spiritual world; but the spirit that 'burns' upon that lamp stand is the essential nature of the person. So the question becomes what is the spirit or the 'fire' that is burning on that lamp stand? The spirit was designed to be the lamp stand of light from within that lightened the whole inner man with the light of God's presence.

But that 'Fire' went out when Adam and Eve fell in the Garden and a new flame (spirit) was received into man. Ephesians 2 calls this spirit- "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience." (Eph 2:2) This spirit makes one a child of wrath because it fills the body, heart and mind with darkness. That is, God is not present to empower the person to will and to do His good pleasure.

Some people when afforded the opportunity to experience the true light of God's Spirit refuse it and love the darkness (John 3). Why? Because they love their evil deeds and the light of God's presence always challenges the evil. The Light of God exposes and reproves sin. But the unsaved have a spirit of darkness- the exact opposite of what God intended. This is why the whole world lies in darkness because the light that is in them is darkness, and it is a great darkness. (Matt. 6:23) God wants to establish His Fire upon the Lamp stand of our spirit and make it once again the candle of the Lord that God intended it to be. This is how God makes us lights in the world.

Rebirth- a Changing of the Flame

By way of simple illustration one is Born Again when God extinguishes the old flame of darkness and lights the lamp with his Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament there was a Fire that was only to be used for God's service. Any other fire was 'strange' or 'common' fire. God kindled that fire and it had to be maintained by the priests so that it NEVER went out. When the Fire of God came down to consume the sacrifice the Shekinah Glory of God filled the Temple. Where there is no Fire there is no Glory. Where there is no glory there is no change into the likeness of Christ.

Israel did not want to see the Glory of God. They did not want God to draw near. In simple terms they did not want the Fire of God. Nadab and Abihu offered 'common' fire before the Lord and were judged immediately. They are typical of folk that want to serve God in their own strength and energy. They offer the Lord their own fire and not the Fire of God. This is why all of man's righteousness is as filthy rags to God. They were not produced by the Holy Spirit. This is very important. God will only accept genuine works and these are those produced as 'fruit' of the Holy Spirit.

The children of Israel wanted an earth bound religion that looked like the real thing but God's manifest presence was not there. They wanted the gatherings and the singing and the speaking- but they wanted to offer it all with what the bible calls Strange Fire. This is man's own human energies. This is the fire that spreads darkness- because Jesus said it was a light that be darkness. The true Fire of God will cleanse our lives. It will not leave us the same. It will burn up the chaff of compromise. It will leave us utterly burning for Him. This is not a cheap imitation of the nature of God, this is the nature of God working in us by the Holy Spirit.

Until man becomes dead to Sin and alive unto God it is impossible to yield the fruit of the Spirit. You cannot train a person to yield a particular fruit any more than you can train a tree to yield a particular fruit. It brings

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forth after it's own kind. If you want to change the fruit you have to first change the root. For man this means he/she has to die to the Old Man and be reborn in the New Man. The spirit that now works in the children of disobedience must be supplanted by the Holy Spirit that works in man both to will and to do God's good pleasure. Men are born of their father the Devil, performing his lusts, but at rebirth men and women do by nature those things that are contained in the Law of God. A man with a nature to serve God does not need constrained by the Old Covenant law system because they naturally please God.