

THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVERTS

1. THE BEGINNING
2. HE CREATES
3. HE CONVINCES
4. HE CONVICTS
5. HE CONVERTS
6. HE CONSECRATES
7. HE COMFORTS
8. HE COMMITS
9. THE CHALLENGE

"Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." In reply Jesus declared, **"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."** "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, **"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' **The wind blows wherever it pleases.** You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:1-8)

The Holy Spirit's work with each of us begins with *creating us*; than *convincing us about Truth (Jesus)*; next *He seeks to convict us about sin* followed by our present consideration-- *conversion*.

WE MUST BE BORN AGAIN - Jesus in John 3:3

"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

WHY must we be born again? Matthew Henry answers wisely:

The necessity of this change. First, Christ here shows that it is necessary in the nature of the thing, for we are not fit to enter into the kingdom of God until we are born again: That which is born of the flesh is flesh, v. 6. Here is our malady, with the causes of it, which are such that it is plain there is no remedy but we must be born again.

1. We are here told what we are: We are flesh, not only corporeal but corrupt, (Genesis 6:3). The soul is still a spiritual substance, but so wedded to the flesh, so captivated by the will of the flesh, so in love with the delights of the flesh, so employed in making provision for the flesh, that it is mostly called flesh; it is carnal. And what communion can there be between God, who is a spirit, and a soul in this condition?

2. How we came to be so; by being born of the flesh. It is a corruption that is bred in the bone with us, and therefore we cannot have a new nature, but we must be born again. The corrupt nature, which is flesh, takes rise from our first birth; and therefore the new nature, which

is spirit, must take rise from a second birth. Nicodemus spoke of entering again into his mother's womb, and being born; but, if he could do so, to what purpose? If he were born of his mother a hundred times, that would not mend the matter, for still that which is born of the flesh is flesh; a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean. He must seek for another original, must be born of the Spirit, or he cannot become spiritual. The case, in short, is this: though man is made to consist of body and soul, yet his spiritual part had dominion over his corporeal part that he was denominated a living soul (Genesis 2:7), but by indulging the appetite of the flesh, in eating forbidden fruit, he prostituted the just dominion of the soul to the tyranny of sensual lust, and became no longer a living soul, but flesh. Dust thou art. The living soul became dead and inactive; thus in the day he sinned he surely died, and so he became earthly. In this degenerate state, he begat a son in his own likeness; he transmitted the human nature, which had been entirely deposited in his hands, thus corrupted and depraved; and in the same plight it is still propagated. Corruption and sin are woven into our nature; we are shapen in iniquity, which makes it necessary that the nature be changed. It is not enough to put on a new coat or a new face, but we must put on the new man, we must be new creatures. Secondly, Christ makes it further necessary, by his own word: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, You must be born again,"

v. 7. from Matthew Henry's Commentary, John 3:1-21, Pg 34

EXERCISE 34

In your own words tell why we must be born again

WE MUST BE BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT - Jesus in John 3:5

"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

EXERCISE 35

Search out the following Scriptures and write down the word(s) in each verse which refers to *birth*. On the second line indicate how this addresses being *born again*.

1. James 1:18 _____

2. Ephesians 2:17,18 _____

3. Galatians 4:26 _____

4. I Peter 1:23 _____

5. I Peter 1:3 _____

6. John 1:12,13 _____

7. Romans 8:15 _____

8. Romans 2 :28,29 _____

9. Colossians 2:11,12 _____

10. I Peter 2:2 _____

11. II Corinthians 5:17 _____

12. Galatians 4:4-7 _____

13. Galatians 3:26 _____

14. I Peter 2:2 _____

15. I Peter 2:2 2 Peter 3:18 _____

16. Colossians 2:6 Romans 8:1 _____

17. John 3:1-18 -- At what point in this conversation did Jesus tell Nicodemus how to be born again? _____

The following new birth testimony shared by Rodger Thompson, minister of the Northwest Christian College of Wichita, Kansas illustrates well the Holy Spirit at work converting.

"I share this with you as a way of praising God! My heart must declare His mighty deeds for He is faithful in all things!

I was invited to speak at Joel Smith's ordination at the Green Mt. Christian Church in Lakewood, Colorado where we had ministered for 18 years. Joel is a young man who grew up under our ministry there and then graduated from Manhattan Christian College where the Lord called him into ministry. It was a true honor to be asked to participate.

We arrived at our host home about 6 Saturday evening. We stepped out of the car and were met at the curb with hugs and warm greetings. Then Jack said, "Before you do anything else, call Randy Cohrs. He wants to be baptized." I was stunned! Randy and his wife Terri started attending Green Mountain Christian Church about 10 years ago. Terri was a long time member of the Christian Church, and Randy was raised Lutheran. He is a trained scientist with a Ph.D in microbiology. Randy works in research with Colorado University Medical Center on a project involving the herpes virus. He is very well educated and very intelligent. Christianity seems to have been a great experiment for Randy, much like one he might perform in his laboratory. He had no qualms about participating fully in church, but true faith was a difficult concept to him. In every other way Randy is a regular guy. We became close friends, talking often about the Scripture and matters of faith. In his heart Randy had always been one of the kindest, most generous and gracious men I had ever known. His lifestyle had been more Christian than that of many Christians. But when I talked to Randy of a personal relationship with Christ, he could only wonder about it, for he had no "experience" to examine or understand.

In the last year Randy passed through some very difficult circumstances. He began to be aware that someone greater than himself was at work on his behalf. While many things were at work to bring Randy to the point where he would meet God, he gave us testimony of this one. Contemplating the fact that he and his wife are, sadly, childless, he would have no one in his old age to be there for him, no child to care for him. Then he heard that unmistakable voice, the voice of God-- **"I will be there with you!"** Randy began to understand what it meant to have a personal relationship with God. In the days that followed He saw God more and more in His life until finally after a dramatic intervention for Randy before an extremely high powered panel of scientists, Randy called his wife and told her he needed to be baptized. He arrived home on the plane the same day we arrived in Denver. He did not want to wait another moment. When I called him on the phone, he wanted to be baptized right then. We went to the church building, where a small group of us listened to his testimony and worshipped and Randy was baptized.

Ten years of prayer and witness. All in God's good time. Even a microbiologist can know the God who created the microbes he studies. **Now Randy's grand experiment is no longer an experiment. He speaks of God in the first person. His faith and knowledge connect and he has gone from observing life to living it. Praise God!**

As for the Sunday morning worship service and the ordination -- suffice it to say that God was there in power. I do not know all that He did and will do in all our hearts who were there, but I know I will never be the same. I never am when God does His thing. I cannot find the words to describe what it was like at the "mountain top." If you've been there you know. I am beginning to understand why God is so careful not to let us see too much of His glory at one time. We literally cannot handle it physically or emotionally. I am greatly strengthened in my spirit but very weak in my flesh.

God be praised! - Rodger - October, 1998

In considering the *process of being born again* we must be ever mindful that God's offering for us to be born again (forgiveness of our sins) is offered *free*.

Several years ago an evangelist in England prepared some large placards and, posted them all over the town, declaring that if any man in that town who was in debt would come to his office before 12 o'clock on a certain day with the proof of indebtedness, he would pay the debt. This news spread all over the town but the people did not believe him.

One man said to his neighbor, "John, do you believe this man will pay our debts?"

"No, of course not, it's only a hoax."

The day came and instead of there being a great rush, nobody came. Now it is no wonder that there is not a great rush of men into the kingdom of God to have their debts paid, when a man can be saved for nothing.

About 10 o'clock a man was walking in front of the office. He looked this way and that to see if anyone was looking, and by and by, satisfied that there was no one looking, he slipped in and said, "I saw a notice about town that if any one would call here at a certain hour you would pay their debts; is there any truth in it?"

"Yes," said the man. "It's quite true. Did you bring the necessary papers with you?"

"Yes."

After the man had paid the debt, he said, "Sit down, I want to talk with you," and he kept him there until 12 o'clock. before 12 o'clock had passed two more came in and had their debts paid. At 12 o'clock he let them all out. Some other men were standing around the door.

"Well, did he pay your debts?"

"Yes," they said, "it was quite true; our debts were all paid."

"Oh, then we'll go in and get ours paid. "

They went, but it was too late. Twelve o'clock had passed. To every one of you who is a bankrupt sinner—and you never saw a sinner in the world that was not a bankrupt sinner, Christ comes and He says: "I will pay your debts." D. L MOODY

EXERCISE #36

Find two or three Scripture verses which declare salvation is *free* and write them below:

Brother Roger Day of Highmore, South Dakota shares these meaningful *new birth* thoughts with us.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) Born again. Do you know what Jesus had in mind and when He said those two words to Nicodemus? He was talking covenant talk. He was telling Nicodemus what it meant to have a covenant with God.

Let me paint the picture I believe was in Jesus' mind. Imagine a baby, a little baby born of an unwed mother. No one knows who its daddy is and no one wants to know. He is a child that

nobody wants. He doesn't belong to anyone. Now picture the best kind of family you can think of. A family that loves God. The man has a good job. They're blessed financially. They're givers and lovers of people and they fall in love with this baby. Before long, they adopt it.

What's happened? That baby was reborn. He got a new set of parents. Through adoption, he has now become an heir. Why? Not because of anything the baby has done. Those parents didn't say, "I want you to look at that baby. I'm so impressed with all that child has done for us. He has certainly earned our love and respect." No, it's a baby. It couldn't have done anything to earn its new life. This man and this woman agreed together out of the love in their hearts and bestowed grace on that child. Now he has access to everything they have. When they offer him a bottle, he doesn't knock the bottle away and say, "I'm so humble and undeserving. Just give me water." Of course not. That baby acts like part of the family--and not just part of the family but the best part of the family. Because in Jesus' day a covenant or adopted child had the same birthright as the first-born son.

That's what Jesus was talking about when He said, "You must be born again." He was talking about grace. He was talking about a new relationship of favor. A new family. A new authority. A new power.

If you feel unworthy to receive the rich blessings God has for you today, think about that. Meditate on it, so instead of worrying about and struggling with the needs in your life, you can just walk boldly into the throne room of your Father and receive help to get those needs met. Discover what it really means to be a blood-bought child of Almighty God with a big brother like Jesus. Discover what it means to be born again!"

Roger Day

OUR BEING BORN AGAIN IS LIKE THE WIND THAT BLOWS

"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)

This matter of the new birth being like the wind is a strong indication, much to the consternation of our logical mind set, that the total work of the Holy Spirit cannot be traced like a line on a map. Let us note that the w-o-r-k of the Holy Spirit begins in the life of a human even before he is born. (Psalm 139:13-16.)

Since God's essential nature is SPIRIT he operates on a plane that cannot be discerned by our senses. Even though spirit is ethereal, yet His work is very real! Jesus compared being born again of the water and spirit to the wind when He said; "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound but cannot tell where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)

"Christ said it, and will never unsay it, so all the world cannot gainsay it, that we must be born again. This *born again* operation by the Spirit is compared to the *mysterious wind*. That which is primarily intended here is to show that the Spirit, in sanctifying a soul, is like the wind which we cannot trace. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit, v. 8. The same word (pneuma) signifies both the wind and the Spirit. This comparison is here used to show,

1. That the Spirit, in regeneration, works arbitrarily and as a free agent. The wind bloweth where it listeth for us, and does not attend our order, nor is subject to our command. God directs it; it fulfils his word, (Psalm 148:8).

2. That he works powerfully and with evident effects: Thou hearest the sound thereof; though its causes are hidden, its effects are manifest. When the soul is brought to mourn for sin, to groan under the burden of corruption, to breathe after Christ, to cry Abba-- Father, then we hear the sound of the Spirit, we find He is at work.

3. That he works mysteriously, and in secret hidden ways: Thou canst not tell whence it comes, nor whither it goes. How it gathers and how it spends its strength is a riddle to us; so the manner and methods of the Spirit's working are a mystery. Which way went the Spirit? 1 Kings 22:24. See Ecclesiastes 11:5 and compare it with Psalm 139:14." (from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

EXERCISE 37

Write a paragraph in your own words telling WHY being *born again of the Spirit* is like the wind.

At the age of twelve in the spring of that year I, too, had realized I was losing the battle in the War against sin, so I surrendered to the Captain of my Salvation--Jesus!

Now, each of us having surrendered to Jesus can shout above the din of the world--"The War is Over! The war is over! And we are winning!"

EXERCISE 38

On the outline chart below check the appropriate lines indicating where the Holy Spirit is working and what he has done in your life.

___ *HE has CREATED ME - body, soul, spirit*

___ *HE has CONVINCED ME about Jesus*

___ *HE has CONVICTED ME of sin*

___ *HE has CONVERTED ME -
I have repented, received Jesus, been baptized*

___ *HE is CONSECRATING ME - making me like Jesus*

___ *HE COMFORTS ME*

___ *HE will COMMIT ME*

After we receive Jesus the Holy Spirit is in us!

Acts 5:29-32

"Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!
The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead-- whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, **and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.**"

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--** whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- **and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.**" (NKJ)

Acts 2:38

"Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. **And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**"

Matthew 28:18-20

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"."

1 John 3:23-24

"And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And **this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.**"

Acts 1:8

"But you will **receive power** when the **Holy Spirit comes on you**; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."