

Sunday November 13th 2016
For Jews Request a Sign.....
Part Ten

1). Joh 3:1 ¶ *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again [born or brought forth from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born [brought forth out] of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

We have seen in our previous studies that it is absolutely vital that we understand the process of being brought forth from above as the means by which the salvation of our soul is accomplished. Just as we had seen in foundation, where there were continuing Divine actions brought forth from above in days 2-6 to complete the restoration of the ruined creation in Genesis Chapter 1 and just as we had seen that it was Divine action brought forth from above that turned the water to wine in the 6 stone water pots at the wedding in Cana, pointing to God's future complete work in His wayward son Israel, so it is only through Divine action brought forth from above that the metamorphosis can be accomplished in us thereby restoring us to the pristine condition of Man before the fall with a fully redeemed spirit, soul and body -
Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the [continual] renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

a). And we have seen that this continual 'renewing' process which works the metamorphosis in us resulting in the salvation of our soul must be a daily occurrence - 2Co 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being [continually] renewed day by day.*

And that this continual renewal is worked in us only one way - Col 3:10 *and have put on the new man who is [being continually] renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

We are continually to be renewed in 'knowledge', the 'epignosis', mature knowledge concerning all facets of Christ and His coming Kingdom. And this is a work of the Holy Spirit in us that was promised by our Lord prior to His death and resurrection - Joh 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.*

And the only way that we can attain this mature knowledge, so as to be continually renewed, is by allowing the living Word through the written Word to flow into our saved human spirit day by day. There is no other way. The Holy Spirit does not work on 'His own authority', but only on that which He hears, which is the Word of God. We must allow Him to continue to breathe in us the breath of life – life for the age to come. We must be continually filled with the God breathed Word or there can be no metamorphosis.

b). As the God breathed Word continues to fill us so mature knowledge comes through the work of the Holy Spirit opening the scriptures to our understanding through the types and antitypes, the metaphors, the figurative language, the parallels, comparing scripture with scripture; by putting things together line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, beginning with Moses and what this means is that the Holy Spirit takes us beyond the literal comprehension of what the words of the scriptures say to give us understanding of the spiritual truth contained in those words – 2Co 3:6 ¶ *who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

And as this happens so our mind is renewed according to the image of the One who created us, so the metamorphosis is being accomplished, so the salvation of our soul is worked out.

c). Paul says this same thing this way in Romans - Ro 1:16 ¶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it [the gospel of Christ] is **the power of God to salvation** for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

d). And the same thing this way in 1 Corinthians - 1Co 1:18 *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it [the message of the cross] is **the power of God.***

e). And the same as we find in Peter - 1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by **the power of God** through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

All of these verses echo that which we know from - Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Which itself is the companion verse to - Eph 5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be [continually] filled with the Spirit,*

f). As we see in the Lord's conversation with Nicodemus it is only through the process of being brought forth from above, completely apart from our own efforts, that we will 'see the Kingdom of God' as it is spiritually perceived – to see it firstly through the eyes of faith in our present – Heb 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

And then to see it in reality as we enter into rulership with our Lord in our future – Job 19:25 *For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, 27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

2). And then because Nicodemus does not understand what the Lord is talking about because he cannot see beyond the letter, Jesus, we will remember, draws from Jewish history referencing the Red Sea crossing and the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night with regards to entering the Kingdom of God, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born [brought forth out] of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* And what the Lord says here is not something different or something in addition to what He said about being brought forth from above, it is rather a further explanation of that same process – 1Co 10:2 *all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,*

a). And of course for ourselves we must see in this the parallel with our own experience of baptism of which the Red Sea crossing forms a type – Ro 6:3 *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.*

We are no more able to raise ourselves from the place of death than we are to work the metamorphosis; it can only be done through a Divine action from above – a spiritual truth that has its foundation in the first Chapter of Genesis- Ge 1:9 ¶ *Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. 10 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 So the evening and the morning were the third day.*

b). Here then is the foundational type of resurrection from the place of death as the dry land is raised from the midst of the waters. And as we can see this is only possible by Divine action from above, 'Then God said.....'

c). And then we also see that it is only that which God has raised from the place of death that is able to be fruitful, 'the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind' – and the fruit that is produced is brought forth from above, 'Then God said....'.

d). So, not only is it the power of God that brings the dry land from the place of death, but it is also the power of God that produces fruit in that dry land. The land has no ability of itself to do either of these things.

e). And so, to bring this into our own experience we will realize that it is only the power of God, brought forth from above, that is able to raise us up from the place of death, pictured through our rising from the waters of baptism. And that which has been raised from the dead is our new man, the man of the spirit as our old man, the man of the flesh, has been crucified with Christ and is to remain buried in the place of death.

f). Now if we follow the type from Genesis we will know that it is only the new man, raised from the place of death, who is able to be fruitful and we would also know that whatever fruit is produced by the new man, the man of the spirit, must be brought forth by the power of God from above.

g). This is exactly the teaching that the Lord presented to Nicodemus through His reference to the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt. But here is the thing we must keep in mind here the historical reference to Israel's past must also draw attention to Israel's failure. Although they had been delivered from Egypt, delivered from the place of death by Divine action from above - Ex 19:4 *'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.*

They did not then allow the continuing bringing forth from above which would have resulted in producing fruit as they failed to do that required of them – Ex 19:5 *'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*

h). And the reason for this we know only too well - Heb 3:18 *And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

In other words they did not believe that which God had said, they did not receive His word and could not understand the spiritual truth contained in it and therefore God could not bring forth from above the work in their lives that would have guaranteed them their inheritance. And this is the same situation that we find for Israel at the Lord's first advent - Joh 12:48 *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*

i). So then, to bring this back to ourselves we will remember what the scripture says - 1Co 10:3 *all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 ¶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

We must learn the lesson taught to us through the experience of the Jews and allow the continual bringing forth from above that will bring us to maturity and fruitfulness and the realization of our hope; all of which is dependent upon our being continually filled with the Spirit through the written Word which is alive - Joh 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life [for the age to come]; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

j). And if we should choose to do this our choice will have been brought forth from above in response to the implanted word - Php 2:12 ¶ *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now*

much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

3). Jesus addresses this very process with His disciples prior to His crucifixion in - Joh 15:4 *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

As we look at these verses let's remember that at the beginning of John's Gospel we are told - Joh 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,*

The living Word, which is Christ, is inseparable from the written Word and therefore to abide in Christ is to abide in the written Word and if Christ abides in us it is the written Word that abides in us as we are continually filled with the Spirit.

a). And note particularly v5 of John Chapter 15, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.* If we abide in the Word and the Word abides in us then we can bear much fruit – without this dual aspect of abiding we cannot bear fruit.

b). And notice especially the end of the verse, 'without Me you can do nothing' – without the Word, brought forth from above we can do nothing when it comes to bearing fruit, which takes us back once again to what we saw on day 3 in Genesis Chapter 1 and is exactly what the Lord tells Nicodemus in- Joh 3:21 *"But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."*

To 'do' the truth can only come through the Spirit of truth, brought forth from above, which must result in coming to the light as both the truth and the light are the Lord Jesus the living, written Word - Joh 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Joh 8:12 ¶ *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

c). And our deeds, our works, our fruit will be seen to have been done 'in God' – they will have been brought forth from above by the Spirit apart from our own effort.

d). And this is what we had seen from 1 John last time - 1Jo 2:29 *If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born [brought forth out] of Him.*

1Jo 4:7 ¶ *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born [brought forth out of] of God and knows God.....16b.....God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*

e). If we are to practice righteousness and if we are to love one another this cannot be done in our own strength. Both righteousness and love define the nature and character of God and to do either is to be a 'partaker of the Divine nature' which is brought forth from above with respect to the new man, the man of the spirit – that which is the nature and character of God has no association whatsoever with the man of flesh. Again - Joh 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.*

As the knowledge of this process is brought forth from above perhaps we can begin to better understand the admonition - Ga 5:16 *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

f). To walk in the Spirit we must be filled with the Spirit as we cannot walk in that with which we are not filled. To do that which entails walking in the Spirit can only be brought forth from above, brought forth out of God and as we have seen through the scriptures today this is not possible apart from abiding in the Word and the Word abiding in us.

g). We will remember that we read in John Chapter 15 that we cannot bear fruit apart from abiding in the vine, which is Christ, as without Him we can do nothing. But if we do abide in the written Word which allows the living Word to abide in us we can produce much fruit. And this is what is addressed in verses that follow on in Galatians Chapter 5 - Ga 5:22 *But the fruit of the*

Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

This then is the fruit that will be brought forth from above if we are continually filled with the Spirit. None of these attributes have any association with our old man but only with the new, we cannot manufacture them they can only come from God.

h). But here is the thing, if we do not receive and believe that which the scriptures say about being brought forth from above, if we don't see the spiritual truth contained in this, as Nicodemus, then when faced with a situation in which the fruit of the Spirit could be manifest we can only resort to our pre-set default, the man of the flesh, because we would have no spiritual resource to draw from - Jas 1:23 *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.*

i). And within John's Gospel Jesus addresses this spiritual resource from another 2 perspectives - Joh 4:13 *Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting [Lit. age lasting] life."*

Joh 6:53 *Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal [Lit. age lasting] life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.*

So to conclude for today let's keep these 4 things in mind -

We must be continually filled with the Spirit if the salvation of our soul is to be realized

The mature knowledge, the spiritual truth, which is brought forth from above can only be received by the man of the spirit

Producing fruit for the Kingdom can only come through the man of the spirit, never the man of the flesh, and is brought forth from above

Without being continually filled with the Spirit we can only ever resort to the man of the flesh

j). We will have to continue with this next time though – if the Lord is willing.