

Sunday October 16th 2016
For Jews Request a Sign.....
Part Eight

1). Joh 2:6 *Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it. 9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. 10 And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"*

We have seen in previous weeks how this first sign that Jesus did, turning the water to wine at the wedding in Cana, pictures for us the complete restoration of Israel following Christ's return at the end of the Tribulation with Israel again becoming the wife of God.

a). And last time we had looked at a secondary application for this event as it would apply to us in the process of the salvation of our souls –
Eph 5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*

Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

And we had come to see both that pictured for Israel and that for ourselves is the result of a sovereign act of God completely apart from the individuals involved.

2Co 4:6 *For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the*

face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

b). And this is not surprising because it is exactly how God lays out this process in foundation.

c). Now we have known for a long time that the 6 days of restoration seen in Genesis Chapter 1 pictures the 6000 years for the restoration of fallen Man as a whole, with a 7th Day to follow.

d). As 6 is also the number of Man and 7 is a number of completion we will also realize that the pattern for the restorative process seen in Genesis 1 is the same for each of us individually. There is a complete period of time allotted to each of us, although the length of that time will be different for each one, where God deals with us as individuals with a view to complete restoration leading to rulership or a denial of rulership in the 7th Day, the Millennial Kingdom – and this is seen within the overall scope of the 6000 years and the 1000 years to follow.

Power Point – Slides 1-2

And let's not have any misconception here – the length of time that God has to work with each eternally saved individual is enough to accomplish His purpose in that person's life. Our success or failure in this has never been dependent upon the length of our Christian life, but upon our willingness to submit to Him through His Word during it - Heb 12:5 *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening [Lit. Child Training] of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, [Child trains] And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, [Child training] God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?[Child train]*

Our success is based upon our willingness to be continually filled with the Spirit, to allow the word of Christ to dwell in us richly in all wisdom, to receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save our souls.

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2). And so in the first Chapter of Genesis the Lord sets out the timeframe for the restoration of fallen Man, the time frame in which He will work with each eternally saved individual to bring that individual to the place where they will once again be in the image and likeness of God occupying a place of rulership in Christ's Millennial Kingdom having received the salvation of their soul.

a). Now in this opening Chapter not only is the pattern set for the timeframe in which God will accomplish His purpose, but also the pattern for how He will accomplish it - Ge 1:2 *The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.* 3 ¶ *Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.* 4 *And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.* 5 *God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.*

It is here on Day 1 of the restoration process for the material creation that God brings light into the darkness. The Spirit of God was 'hovering', God spoke and His word was brought to pass.

b). This was a sovereign act of the Triune God with respect to the ruined creation that could do nothing of itself to change its condition.

c). This of course gives us the foundational picture for eternal salvation, when we believe on the One who is the Light of the world and the Holy Spirit breathes into us the breath of life.

d). But what we now need to note is that the method God employs on Day 1 of the restoration of the material creation is then repeated over the next 5 days - Ge 1:6 ¶ *Then God said,*

Ge 1:9 ¶ Then God said,

And so on.

e). The accomplishment of the restoration of the ruined creation for the purpose of rulership is brought about solely through continuing sovereign acts of God after His initial action on Day 1 – the creation is completely unable to do any of this for itself.

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f). And this is incredibly important for us to understand because this is the only way that ruined Man, each of us individually, can be completely restored for the purpose of rulership – God’s Word through the power of the Spirit – continual sovereign acts of God within our saved human spirit beyond our eternal salvation.

3). This profound truth is introduced by John at the beginning of his Gospel and is then the subject of the Lord’s conversation with Nicodemus in John Chapter 3 - Joh 1:11 *He came to His own, [things] and His own [people] did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

The Christ was born ‘King of the Jews’ and as such came to His own ‘things’, things associated with His father David - Ac 13:34b.....*He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies [Lit. Holy things] of David.'*

But His own people, the Jews, as a nation, did not receive Him although individuals within the nation did – and those who did are the ones who received Him as Messiah, the King of the Jews, believing both His word and the signs He performed in connection with His word.

a). And those who received Him in this way are said to have been ‘born’ or ‘brought forth’ out ‘of God’ – not of blood or the will of the flesh, nor the will of man.

b). And as we look at these verses from John let’s remind ourselves once again that Jesus came to an eternally saved generation of Jews who had availed themselves of God’s provision for sin, the death and shed blood of the Passover lambs. And so being ‘born of God’ here in John Chapter 1 is not dealing with matters of eternal salvation – rather it has to do with the continuing sovereign acts of God as we have just seen in Days 2-6 in Genesis Chapter 1.

c). Perhaps we can demonstrate this concept of being ‘born from above’ through these verses from – Mt 16:15 *He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*

The revelation Peter received here did not come to him by 'flesh and blood', it was not by human design or human effort, but was 'brought forth' 'born' out of God – a sovereign act of God apart from any effort on Peter's part.

d). And this revelation could only have been given in response to Peter receiving/believing Christ's message concerning the Kingdom and the signs that pointed to it and the identity of the One performing them.

e). And for each individual Jew who received the Christ after this fashion they were given 'the right to become children of God' – to be child trained for the purpose of rulership.

f). And so, that which we see here from John Chapter 1 forms the basis for the Lord's conversation with Nicodemus in Chapter 3.

4). 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."*

So, Nicodemus is a Pharisee, he is 'a ruler of the Jews', one of those who sat in Moses' seat, a teacher of the Law; and he came to Jesus 'by night'.

a). And notice the subject Nicodemus comes to talk about, 'these signs that You do' which he acknowledges can't be done 'unless God is with him'.

b). The signs of course were the numerous physical healings the Lord had been performing pointing to the spiritual healing available to the nation upon repentance with a view to entering the Kingdom of the heavens which was the focus of Christ's message.

c). Now, although Nicodemus acknowledged God's hand in these signs, they couldn't be done without Him, he clearly did not understand what they were pointing to or who they revealed – and this is exactly what the Lord draws attention to in His response to Nicodemus's statement –

Joh 3:3 *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 [out] of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

d). Because Nicodemus had not received Christ or believed on His name [the message and the signs to go with the message] he had not had the experience of being 'born from above' as Peter had as recorded in Matthew Chapter 16 – Nicodemus saw the signs but he could not see 'the Kingdom of God' or the King to which they pointed.

e). We should be careful here to realize that seeing the Kingdom in v3 and entering the Kingdom in v5 are NOT dealing with the 2 aspects of salvation, spirit and then soul. These verses are dealing with exactly the same thing and in this respect seeing the Kingdom and entering the Kingdom are synonymous.

f). Now, unfortunately these verses in John Chapter 3 are often misused to teach things concerning eternal salvation, being used as part of the gospel of grace. The problem arises because that described in these verses is exactly how eternal salvation does take place – we were all 'born from above' by a sovereign act of God in order to pass from death to life just as in Day 1 of the Genesis account. There really is no other way that the process of our eternal salvation could be described – but scripture as a whole never refers to eternal salvation in this way and this is certainly not what is being referred to in these verses from John.

g). If we get this wrong and only see the gospel of grace in these verses then we do away with that which the Lord wants us to learn from them, which is that there is to be a continuing process of our being 'born from above' throughout our Christian life just as we have seen in Genesis and that it is only through this process, which are sovereign acts of God, that we may be restored to a place of rulership in the 7th Day.

h). It's obvious that Nicodemus does not understand this process from the comment that he then makes - *Joh 3:4 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?"*

i). And in order to correct his thinking Jesus takes him to Jewish history, to that which is recorded in the Law of Moses of which Nicodemus is a teacher *Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born [or brought forth] [out] of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

The reference here is to the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt led by Moses following the night of the Passover.

j). On that night of the first Passover all the firstborn in the land of Egypt died, both Egyptian and Jew, but for the Jew God accepted a substitutionary death, the Passover lambs, in the place of His firstborn son, Israel –
Ex 4:22 *"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn."*

Ex 12:12 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. 14 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

k). And so God's firstborn son, Israel died vicariously that night and was subsequently buried in the Red Sea to be raised in resurrection power to newness of life on the eastern bank - Ex 13:21 *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.*

And following the nation being raised from its watery grave the people were led by the Spirit in one direction, to accomplish only one purpose – to receive their inheritance in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to rule over the nations within a Theocracy. This is what the Lord is talking about when He says you have to be brought forth out of water and Spirit to enter the Kingdom.

l). Nicodemus, being the teacher of Israel should have known these things and should have understood them from the scriptures which he taught; he should have known this from Genesis, he should have understood this from Exodus and from the Psalms and the prophets he should have seen Jesus and the Kingdom of the heavens which He came to offer - Lu 24:27 *And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

But Nicodemus did not see and did not understand and as a result found himself in exact accord with that prophesied by Isaiah and quoted by the Lord in - Mt 13:14 *"And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'*

m). And it is because of this failure to know and understand the scriptures even though he was a teacher of the same that Nicodemus received a serious rebuke from the Lord - Joh 3:6 *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again [from above].' 8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? 11 "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. 12 "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"*

n). From a textual and contextual perspective with respect to Israel, Nicodemus and the signs, that which has to be brought forth from above so that the nation could be restored, is spiritual healing.

o). Israel's condition at this time which still extends to the present time has been brought about by the Lord in response to the nations disobedience and just as God is responsible for bringing them to this state so God is the only One who can change it – hence the message of the Kingdom being preceded by the call to repentance. A call that was not heeded by the nation at the Lord's first advent and a call that will not be heeded until the end of the Tribulation in fulfillment of - 2Ch 7:14 *"if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

And

Ho 6:1 ¶ *Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.*

5). Now, as we have already seen this process of being 'born' or 'brought forth' from above with regards to restoration with Kingdom rule in view is applicable not only to the Jews past and future, but also to ourselves in the present. In fact it is the very lynch-pin of the salvation of the soul and is taught in foundation in Genesis, in a type in Exodus, through the events of Christ's first advent in John as well as directly taught in 1 Peter and 1 John – 1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again [brought us forth from above] 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.*

a). And clearly stated in these verses is that beyond our initial salvation there is a continuing work of the Spirit from above in connection with resurrection, with respect to a living hope, an inheritance and a salvation to be revealed in the last time – which we know to be the salvation of the soul.

b). Apart from this continuing work of the Spirit from above in the life of the individual Christian the hope cannot be realized, the inheritance will not be received and the salvation of the soul will be lost. It is then of paramount importance that we understand this and the process by which it happens.

c). If we do understand this and then allow ourselves to participate in it then the purpose for our eternal salvation must be realized.

d). But we will need to pick this up again next time – if the Lord is willing.