

Sunday October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016  
For Jews Request a Sign.....  
Part Nine

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.*

a). We had looked last week at the encounter between the Lord and Nicodemus, an eternally saved teacher of Israel, recorded here in John Chapter 3 and the conversation they had concerned supernatural signs performed by the Lord concerning spiritual healing and the Kingdom He had come to offer.

b). The signs pointed to that which was necessary, spiritual healing, for Israel to receive the Kingdom of the Heavens and this spiritual healing could and can only be accomplished through Divine action born or brought forth from above – healing of this nature could not and cannot be accomplished apart from the sovereign action of the Triune God – something seen in – Ho 5:13 *"When Ephraim saw his sickness, And Judah saw his wound, Then Ephraim went to Assyria And sent to King Jareb; Yet he cannot cure you, Nor heal you of your wound. 14 For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away; I will take them away, and no one shall rescue. 15 I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."* 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.*

c). And so, within the context of the conversation with Nicodemus the Lord makes clear to him that apart from Divine action from above, conditioned upon repentance, neither Nicodemus nor Israel would see the Kingdom in an experiential way – it wouldn't be theirs.

d). And because Nicodemus failed to understand this the Lord turned to Jewish history and the first generation to come out of Egypt to demonstrate the process, showing that apart from death and resurrection – pictured through Israel dying on the night of Passover and then being raised from the watery grave of the Red Sea – and then being led by the Spirit seen in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night – it would be impossible to enter the Kingdom.

e). And all of this is built upon and draws from the foundation set in Genesis Chapter 1 where we see continuing Divine action on the part of the Triune God beyond the light shining in the darkness on Day 1 as the only way the ruined material creation could be restored with a view to the 7<sup>th</sup> Day.

f). So with respect to Israel and her spiritual sickness the only way that the nation can be restored with a view to the 7<sup>th</sup> Day and rulership is through Divine action on the part of the Triune God just as we see in Hosea.

g). And then with respect to the one new man in Christ, the new nation brought into being to receive the Kingdom of the heavens taken from Israel we would know that it is the Kingdom, the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, that is at the heart of all Christian disobedience and unfaithfulness – a condition that can only be remedied by Divine action brought forth from above, which is the essence of what we see in the Lord's words to the Laodicean church in - Re 3:19 *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

h). Likewise, it is only Divine action from above that can deal with the sins of the saved - 1Jo 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

And only the Triune God who can bring about the metamorphosis in connection with the salvation of the soul - Col 1:27b.....*which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

2). These verses from the beginning of 1 Peter will be very familiar to us –

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 with respect] 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. 6 ¶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

It is interesting to note that Peter begins his first letter by drawing attention to being born/brought forth from above, just as John does in the first Chapter of his Gospel and then again in Chapter 3.

a). Each of us has been saved for a purpose, a purpose that is set out very clearly in these verses from 1 Peter – beyond the salvation of our spirit we are continually being brought forth from above through the resurrection of the Lord with respect to a living hope, to an awaiting inheritance seen in conjunction with a future salvation, the salvation of our soul.

b). That seen in these verses then with regards to ourselves directly parallels the Divine work of God from above seen in days 2-6 in Genesis Chapter 1, with the same 7<sup>th</sup> Day in view.

c). The living hope in 1 Peter is the same blessed hope of Titus Chapter 2 Tit 2:11 ¶ *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God, who is our Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

d). And we have all come to see this 'blessed hope', our inheritance and our future salvation only one way – by the power of the Spirit as we are brought forth from above - 1Co 2:7 *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not*

*have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

e). And we can see from these verses that the revelation we receive concerning the things God has prepared for those who love Him, our inheritance and the salvation of our soul, have been revealed to us through the Holy Spirit, through the God breathed Word. And because this must be a progressive, continuing work of the Spirit is the reason why we are commanded in Ephesians - Eph 5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be [continually] filled with the Spirit,*

Being continually filled with the Spirit is a process on our part that must never stop if we are to be brought forth from above to the salvation of our soul.

f). We will remember these verses from - Col 2:1 ¶ *For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 ¶ Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.*

All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge concerning the 'mystery of God' are to be found in Christ and we know from our previous study of the beginning of John's Gospel that Christ is the Word and always has been and always will be God and so to find the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ we go to the Word and allow the Holy Spirit to bring these forth from above. And this process we need to see and understand so that no one can deceive us with persuasive words to the contrary.

g). And according to the scriptures it is through being continually filled with the Spirit in this way that the metamorphosis is brought about in us.

3). 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.*

This familiar verse from Romans Chapter 12 contains 2 commands. One is a negative, 'do not be conformed' and the other a positive, 'but be transformed'.

a). The word translated 'conformed' has the idea of following a pattern or outline with regards to this present age. So then, we are commanded not organize our lives in line with the way things operate in this age, orchestrated by the god of this age.

b). Instead of conforming ourselves to this age we are commanded to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. And as we know, the word translated 'transformed' gives us our English word metamorphosis – a word that describes an inward change that is accomplished entirely apart from the power of the individual involved.

c). And in this there is a stark contrast with the word conformed – we can choose and then deliberately set in place our conformity to this age; we can make it happen, but we are completely powerless to bring about the metamorphosis. Rather this transformation is brought about through the renewing of our mind which is a continual process.

d). So, the question we would need to answer is, 'How is our mind to be renewed?' And the place we will begin is - 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.*

What we learn from our verse here is that there is to be a continual internal renewing, the renewing of our mind, described here by the phrase 'the inward man' that is to happen 'day by day' – or to say this another way, each day, every day.

e). This continual renewing of our mind to bring about the metamorphosis must take place every day throughout the course of our pilgrim journey.

f). Now we can add to this another scripture that will complete our answer - 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,*

And the key word in this verse for us at the moment is the word 'knowledge', the Greek word 'epignosis' which literally means knowledge upon knowledge, that which we have come to call mature knowledge. And it is this mature knowledge that the Holy Spirit draws attention to through Paul immediately prior to the verses we read a short while ago from 2 Corinthians -

1Co 2:6 ¶ *However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.....*

g). And the only way that we can attain this mature knowledge is by allowing the living Word to flow into our saved human spirit day by day. There is no other way. We must allow God to continue to breathe in us the breath of life. We must be continually filled with the God breathed Word or there can be no metamorphosis.

h). As the God breathed Word continues to fill us so mature knowledge comes through 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.

i). And again, this is a work of the Holy Spirit in us as we submit ourselves to His Word - 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. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

Laying aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness would parallel not being conformed to this age from Romans 12 and receiving with meekness the implanted word parallels being transformed by the renewing of our mind, bringing about the metamorphosis, resulting in the salvation of our soul.

j). Receiving the word with meekness has to do with humility and might be better understood by comparing these verses - Jas 4:10 *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

1Pe 5:5 ¶ *Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

k). With all of this in mind let's read again - 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.***

The treasure here takes us back to the verses we looked at in 1 Corinthians Chapter 2 and having this treasure in earthen vessels finds echoes of the 6 water pots in John Chapter 2 and just as those water pots could not turn the water in them to wine so we cannot bring about the metamorphosis. Both in Cana of Galilee and in ourselves it is the excellence of the power of God and not of us that accomplishes His purpose.

l). And we can see this same thought again in these verses from Ephesians - Eph 3:16 *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, **to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,** 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to **the power that works in us,** 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

4). 1Jo 2:24 *Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.....28 ¶ And now, little children, abide in Him, that*

*when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born [or brought forth out] of Him.*

John is writing in his first letter to those he addresses as 'little children', which can only be a reference to those who are engaged in the child training of the Lord and he tells them that they should 'let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning' which would take us back to Chapter 1 - 1Jo 1:5 ¶ *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*

And from our previous study of this verse we had seen that Jesus has always been God and therefore has always been light and as He is the Word so the Word has always been light.

a). And so, putting this together, John tells those being child trained that they should let the light, the Word abide in them which parallels Colossians 3:16 - 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom', that which takes place through being continually filled with the Spirit - and if they let the Word abide in them then they will abide in the Son and the Father.

b). And the reason for doing this is so that they might have confidence and not be ashamed at His coming which is a Judgment Seat issue in relation to the salvation of the soul - a salvation to be realized through the metamorphosis.

c). And in connection with this John draws attention to one of the attributes of God, 'He is righteous' and how those who 'practice righteousness' have been born/brought forth out of Him.

d). What we should understand from this is that we don't 'practice righteousness' by our own strength, but by righteousness being brought forth from above out of God into our life - Ro 1:16 ¶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

e). And exactly the same is seen with regards to love - 1Jo 4:7 ¶ *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born [brought forth out] of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

God is love and if we love one another with the love that defines who God is then this is not by our will or our emotion, it is born/brought forth out of God into our life - 1Th 4:9 ¶ *But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;*

1Jo 3:10 *In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.*

f). These then would be examples of the continuing Divine work born from above in our life – from faith to faith - bringing about our restoration/transformation as we saw pictured in Genesis Chapter 1.

g). Other examples of this can be seen in - 1Jo 5:1 ¶ *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born [brought forth out] of God,*

This is exactly what we saw with Peter in Matthew Chapter 16

1Jo 5:4 *For whatever is born [brought forth out] of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.*

Whatever is born/brought forth out of God must overcome the world because it comes from God - 1Jo 4:4 ¶ *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

h). And because we are dealing with the continuing Divine work from above which comes out of God is the reason John writes - 1Jo 5:18 ¶ *We know that whoever is born [brought forth out] of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.*

Whoever is born of God, whoever receives that which is born/brought forth out of God, such as righteousness and love, cannot experience sin in relation to these attributes. Righteousness and Love come from God and God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all – that which comes from God, that which is born from above, is completely apart from sin and can have no connection with it. Hence the reason why we are admonished to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh – that which is born of the flesh, that which is brought forth out of

our old man, is flesh – corrupt and sinful. But that which is born of the Spirit, brought forth from above out of God, is Spirit - Joh 4:24 "*God is Spirit,*

i). But please, please remember that this process can only take place through being continually filled with the Spirit so that our inward man is renewed day by day. Without continually being filled with the living Word through the scriptures none of this can take place – there will be no renewing of the mind, no metamorphosis and no salvation of the soul.

j). But if we do then we find this - Col 3:10b.....*renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

Ro 8:29 ¶ *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed [fashioned or formed] to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

2Pe 1:4 *by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

We will continue next time – if the Lord is willing.