

Born Again out of Death



Identification (Part 12)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue to explore together all the treasures contained in our special theme for this Easter season: Identification. I've been explaining that to identify with someone means to make yourself one with someone. And that at the cross, in His death, Jesus identified Himself with us. He was identified with us, each of us individually, with our whole fallen human race collectively. He was the last Adam, the entire evil inheritance that rose out of Adam's sin compounded by the sin of every subsequent human being who has ever lived. All that was visited upon Jesus. Isaiah 53:6, "The Lord made to meet together upon Him, [Jesus] the iniquity of us all", our rebellion and all its evil consequences. God brought upon Jesus in that moment of identification, all the evil that was due by justice to us, that in return the way might be open for us receive all the good that was due to Jesus. The Lord opened the way for us to be identified on our side with Jesus, not only in His death but in all that followed His death; burial, resurrection, and even ascension to the very throne of God.

At the end of my talk yesterday I used a little example which I want to return to today, the example of the elevator. I mentioned how I'd found myself in an elevator in a large hotel on the ground floor which was getting ready to go up, and how I looked at the buttons that selected the floor and I saw that above "1" where I was there was "M" which was for mezzanine, and then there was "2" and "3" and "4" all the way up, I believe, to the 15th floor, which was the top. And so I was there meditating on the Gospel, I was in that city to preach, and as I looked at those buttons and considered my position in the elevator I thought that's just like entering by faith into Christ, entering into the elevator. Once you are in the elevator you go wherever the elevator takes you. You're not dependent on your own power to get there. You just depend on the elevator to take you. And I thought, that's like being in Christ. And then as I looked at the buttons again, I saw below "1" another button which had a letter on it, the letter "B." And I was inwardly asking myself, "Well, what does "B" stand for?" And it was really almost comical. It was like immediately the Holy Spirit gave me an inward answer and He said this, "'B' stands for basement, baptism and burial." And I saw it so vividly. When we step into Christ we don't begin by going up but we begin by going down. That is the whole law of spiritual progress everywhere in the universe. If

you want to go up you start by going down.

We step into Christ by faith and we go down with Christ into the basement, which is baptism, which is burial. We're identified with Him in His burial, but out of His burial we enter into His resurrection. Then we just press whichever button we want and we go up to that.

I was sharing this with a friend of mine, a business man in the city where I was preaching, and he made a rather good comment. He said, "Brother Prince, that's a very vivid picture." And I was emphasizing how we could select any floor and go where we wanted in the elevator. And he said, "Brother Prince, that's a very vivid picture, but isn't it a tragedy that so many Christians when they get into the elevator they just press "M" for mezzanine and get off at the next floor. They never go to the heights that are available in Christ. And I've always carried that thought with me.

Well, today I'm going to show you how this truth that I've illustrated from the elevator is more fully unfolded in various passages of the New Testament.

First of all, I'd like to turn to Ephesians chapter 2 verses 4-6:

> "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions, it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." (NIV)

There's one key word there which is the little word "with." It's "with" Christ, "with" Christ, "with" Christ. It's our identification with Christ that makes all the difference. And in the light of that identification, it says that God brings us through into three successive experiences that we share with Jesus.

The first one is God made us alive. When we were dead in transgressions and sins, God made us alive. Second, God raised us up. He resurrected us. The third, it says, "God seated us with Him, still with Him." Now where is Christ seated? We know the answer. He is seated on the throne with God. So if we are seated with Him, where are we? We're on the throne.

There's one translation, the New English Bible, that says, "God enthroned us with Him..." That's the truth. Now that's where you can go in that elevator if you press that button. "Alas," as my friend said, "so many Christians never realized the possibilities that are open to them through their identification with Jesus." But Scripture has given us this that we can get a hold of. God has made us alive with Christ, He has resurrected us with Christ, and He enthroned us with Christ. In other words, when we enter into Christ through faith, when we share with Him in His burial, then we are entitled to share with Him in everything that followed burial, in being made alive, in being resurrected and in being raised up to the throne of God. Isn't that amazing? Isn't that stupendous?

I want to show you this also in Colossians chapter 1 verses 15-18, which is a picture of who Jesus is and what He did. There are seven unique aspects of Jesus unfolded. Five relate to His eternal nature and the remaining two to His redemptive work. Beginning at verse 15:

> "And He is the image of the invisible God, [that's the first, second He is] the first-born of all creation. [Third] For in Him all things were created, [and then every created thing is listed by categories, so He created all things. Fourth] And he is before all things, [He's eternally existent. He was never created, He exists eternally before all things were created. And fifth] in Him all things hold together." (NASB)

There are five eternal facts about Jesus. First, He's the image of the invisible God. Second, He's the first-born before all creation. Third, He created all things. Fourth, He is, He exists eternally before all things. Fifth, in Him all things hold together. He holds the whole universe together.

Now the last two statements that we have not yet looked at apply to that which followed His atoning sacrificial death. Verse 18 of Colossians chapter 1:

> "He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead..." (NASB)

So, the sixth fact is that Jesus is the head of the body, the body is the church, and the seventh, that He's the beginning of a new order because He's the first-born from the dead. In other words, death was in a certain sense the womb out of which God brought forth a totally new order, Jesus being the first one in this order, the head of the body.

Now let me illustrate this from nature in a very beautiful way, I believe. In a natural birth, what part of the body comes forth first? We all know its the head. But when the head emerges, we all know the body is going to follow. And so in this spiritual birth, out of death Jesus, the head of the body emerged first. But what does that tell us? That we who are united with Him as our head, will follow Him in that birth into that new order of creation. We'll follow Him into all that He entered into

through death and resurrection from the dead.

So with Jesus as our head, we as the members of the body united with Him, follow Him in rebirth, out of death into a totally new order, a totally new life, into a union with Him that takes us wherever He goes. Not only into resurrection but into ascension into heavens glory into the place of authority at God's right hand. Listen to how Peter expresses this in 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 3 and 4:

> "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." (NASB)

That's the essence of the message. We are born again through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are identified with Jesus in His death, his burial and then His resurrection. And His resurrection is called a rebirth. It's a birth out of the old order into a new order, a new way of life, a new kind of life. And it says in connection with this in the next verse of 1 Peter:

> "...to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you." (NASB)

So through our identification with Jesus, we pass through death, we are born again through His resurrection, into a new life and into a new order. And this order is totally different. There are three words used to describe it, all of which are not true of the old order of life with which we've been familiar. It's an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away. It cannot be touched by corruption, by decay, by the contamination of sin. It cannot be defiled. It will never fade. It's not subject to all the evil corrupting forces that we have been familiar with all through our lives that have pulled us down. That have defeated us. We've passed out of that realm into a new realm in Jesus through identification with Him. We've been born again to a living hope.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. I'll be going to further consequences that follow from our identification with Jesus.

Radio Program

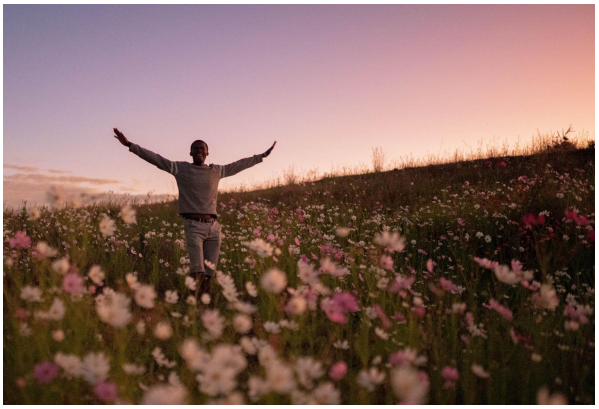
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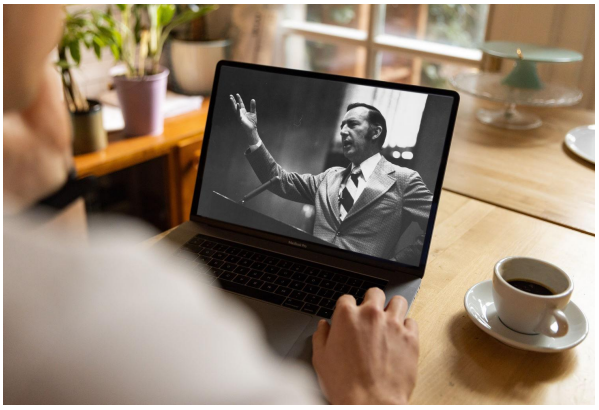
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