

Recognizing God



Born Of God (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue with our theme for this week, "Born of God." I trust you've been finding it helpful. Our theme centers around one of the most important and amazing facts of human history. At a certain point in time God came onto the stage of human history in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Hebrew prophets had long been proclaiming that such a thing would happen and the Jewish people of that time were actually expecting a Messiah, a nation hero, one who would deliver them from the rule and oppression of Imperial Rome and make them a free and sovereign nation again in their own land. They saw clearly enough their material needs but they were for the most part blind to their spiritual needs; whereas, Jesus came primarily at that time to meet the spiritual needs of His people.

Consequently, because of this blindness His own people did not recognize who He was and did not receive Him. But thank God, that was not true of all. Though the nation, as a whole, and particularly the religious leaders, rejected Jesus, there were many individuals who did recognize and receive Him.

At first, all those who received Him were from His own people, Jewish. But in due course, as His Jewish disciples carried His message to the rest of the world, there were multitudes from all nations who likewise recognized and received Him. In my talk today, I'm going to explain what happened to those who received Him and what still happens today to all who receive Him.

I'm going to go back to that first chapter of John's gospel and I'm going to read verses 10-13. The first two verses we read yesterday concerning the fact that His own people did not receive Him. We'll start there but thank God we can go on to something more encouraging; verses 12 and 13 speak about those who did receive Him. Here is what John says:

> "He [Jesus, the Word] was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. [Thank God it doesn't end there. The next verse begins with a 'but.' Thank God for that 'but.'] But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of

> the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Look at that last verse for a moment and leave out the negatives, the not's. It says, "...who were born... of God." That's our theme, that's the title of my message this week, "Born of God." Those who received Him, it says, He gave them the right, or the authority, to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. The word "believe" speaks of faith it's a faith transaction. By faith, they recognized who He was and received Him for what He was in faith. And, as a result of receiving Him, they were born of God.

But, in order to make it absolutely clear what kind of a birth it's speaking of, John says, first of all, they "were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man." So there are three possibilities which are ruled out it was not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man. And the word in Greek is not just a human being but a male or a husband. And we'll read an alternative translation for that verse from the New International Version, John 1:13:

> "...children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."

So there are three possibilities that are ruled out. The only possibility left is: it was a birth of God. God became their Father, a new birth.

Let's look for a moment at the negatives, just to understand them more clearly. It was not of blood it was not of natural descent. It wasn't of human inheritance. Your father or your mother, maybe are wonderful Christians but that doesn't make you a Christian because it's not of natural descent. You may be born into a Christian community or a Christian nation but that doesn't make you a Christian. It's not of natural descent.

Not of the will of the flesh not of some human impulse, such as that which causes us to eat or drink or do things that satisfy our physical nature. It's not that kind of decision.

Third, it's not of the will of a man or a husband's will it's not the prompting of sexual desire that's normal for a husband toward his wife. That's not the kind of impulse or motivation behind it.

But the positive born of God. It's God's purpose. It's God's will. It's God's own nature that is imparted through the new birth. And because it's of God; therefore, those who receive it in receiving Him, Jesus, become God's children.

Further on in John's gospel, Jesus Himself speaks about this experience of being born of God. It's found in John, chapter 3, verses 3-7: a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. Nicodemus had acknowledged that Jesus must be a teacher sent from God because of the miracles which He performed but in reply Jesus pinned him down about the new birth. Reading then from verse 3:

> "In reply Jesus declared, 'I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' '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!' [You see, Nicodemus had the problem of his people he could see only in the natural and in the physical. Jesus was talking in spiritual terms, Nicodemus was trying to interpret Him in physical terms.] Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit [capital 's,' the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit] unless a man is born of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. [He can neither see it nor enter it. And then Jesus continues:] Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. [If it was a fleshly nature, it would be a fleshly birth; but it's a spiritual nature and therefore it's a spiritual birth brought about by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. And then Jesus concludes by saying:] You should not be surprised at my saying, You must be born again.'"

Notice that word "must." There are no options. If you ever want to see or enter the kingdom of God, you must be born again. That phrase "born again" could equally well be translated "born from above," "from on high," or it could be translated "born anew" a totally new beginning.

There are three distinctive features of this birth that Jesus brings out: first of all, it's from God; second, it's from above; and third, it's by the Spirit, the Spirit of God. And so the result corresponds with that which brings it about. It's a birth from God. It makes us God's children. It's from above, it's not from the human level. It opens up to us the kingdom of heaven and it's by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the agent who imparts to us this new nature which comes through receiving Jesus.

Let's compare the words of James in his epistle, chapter 1, verses 17 and 18. First of all, James says in verse 17: "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above..." Everything that's truly good and truly perfect is not on the human or natural level because this whole human level of

ours has been corrupted by sin. So anything truly good or truly perfect must come from above, from God.

And then, going on to speak about specifically this new birth, James says in the next verse, verse 18:

> "In the exercise of His will [God] brought us forth [You remember that John said it was by the will of God, not by the will of man? Here we have the same truth. It's in the exercise of His will (God's will) He brought us forth…] by the word of truth [it comes by believing the Word], so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures."

You see, when we're born again we've become part of a new race, the Emmanuel race, the God-man race. We're still human but we have a divine nature in us. And we're the first fruits of God's creation. There's a new order coming. This sin-corrupted, sin-dominated order that we're familiar with is not going to last forever. The kingdom of God is coming to earth. A new order but we are the beginning of that new order. We're the first fruits of that new creation. We have the privilege of being in the new creation now, yet in the midst of the old order. Everything around us remains unchanged but we have been sovereignly supernaturally changed from above through receiving Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, let me ask you a personal question, as I close this talk today. Have you ever been born again? Do you know what that means? If not, you can be. It's simple. God has made it simple, thank God. It just means that you receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord. That's all you have to do.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be explaining more fully the new kind of life that's produced in us by the new birth.

Radio Program

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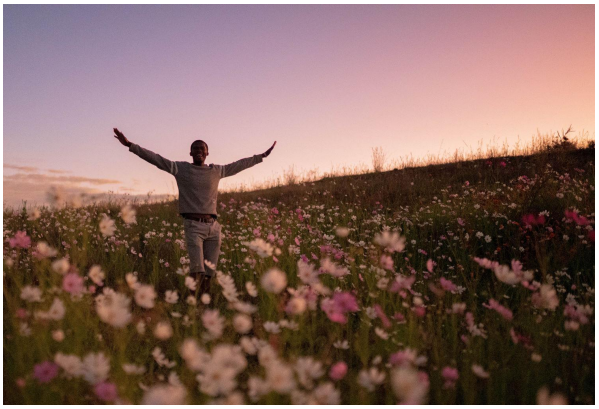

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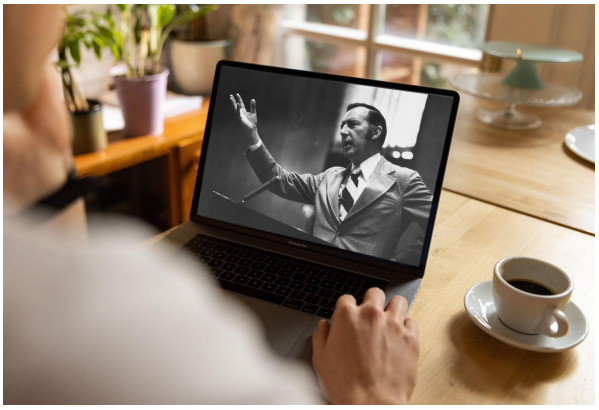

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