

WHAT IS IT TO BE BORN AGAIN?

JOHN 5:1, 4 • TV104B

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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1 John 5:1, 4

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

I’m reading from the book of **1 John**. Now, that’s not the Gospel of John; that’s **the epistle of John, 1 John chapter 5**. I’m reading **verse 1 and verse 4** which will serve as a text.

My subject today is this: **“WHAT IS TO BE BORN OF GOD?”**

John writes in **1 John 5:1**; *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.”* And then he says in **verse 4**; *“Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.”* What is it to be born of God?

Well, every life is begun by a birth, every life; it’s so naturally; you and I are born the first time. We don’t begin to live on this earth until we are born. We begin life when we are born and it is so spiritually; we are born again.

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Birth is the way that we enter into physical life and according to the Word of God the new birth is the way that we enter into the kingdom of God.

The Scripture says **in John**, the Gospel of **John chapter 1:11**: *“He came to his own and his own received him not. But, as many as received him, to them gave he the privilege or the right to become, sons of God (children of God), even to them that believe on his name which were born not of blood, (that is not of family inheritance), nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but born of God.”*

I have three sons and all of them were born into my family. They one day became my sons when they were born into our family. And we become sons of God when we are born of God. We enter into the family of God when we are born into the family of God.

Do you see what I am saying? Every life, every life is begun by a birth. We begin natural life by being born and we begin spiritual life by being born again.

Now, there are many ways in which the natural birth and the spiritual birth are similar. I can't explain the new birth to you; I'm not going to try to do that, but I am going to identify it. I'm going to declare it and pray that the Holy Spirit will bring you into this relationship with God, into the new birth, into the family of God. And after you are born again you will understand something of the new birth.

Now, there are many ways in which the natural birth and the spiritual birth are similar. Let me give you some:

First of all: Both are mysterious!

I'm not going to try to play the part of a physician but I am awed and amazed at the conception and the birth of a child. I'm awed and amazed and I can't explain it and neither can you, how that the smallest seed that has to be seen through a microscope can over a period of time become a full grown adult person. I don't understand that and all of these things. I don't understand how we are in that seed.

David was amazed by the way he was made. He said in **Psalms 139:13-14**: *“Lord; thou hast possessed my reins. Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are thy works and that my soul knoweth right well.”*

So, the natural birth is amazing, it's a mystery. I can't explain it. And the more you think about it the more you will be awed and amazed at the possibility of natural birth, of having a child of your own, being presented with a life in this world.

But, I said they are similar. The spiritual birth is mysterious. You know, John wrote: *“The wind bloweth where it will and you hear the sound but you cannot tell from whence it cometh or whethereth it goeth. So are they or everyone that is born of the spirit.”*

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It's mysterious. "*God quickeneth whom he will.*" We are awed and amazed at that which is dead, now lives. Those who are strangers to God become friends of God. Those who are children of wrath become children of promise and children of the King.

It's a mystery. A man becomes the opposite of what he was. That which he hated now he loves and that which he loves now he hates. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. So, in this way, the natural birth and the spiritual birth, they are similar in that both are mysterious. Both are a mighty miracle of God.

Secondly: Both the natural birth and the spiritual birth are created!

Now, when an infant; you are standing outside a delivery room and the mother's gone into the delivery room with the doctor and after a few moments you hear a cry and you know that that child is born, that child lives, that another mortal who has never lived before, who has never been known before, who's never even been imagined before, who has never had a name before, who has never had existence before, another mortal breathes, has come to this earth to live and to breathe and to die. Life is there where it was never there before. That's the natural birth.

Now you understand that don't you, that when an infant is born into the world, it didn't exist prior to this moment; a new life begins? Well, so in the new birth. When a man is born again, when a man is born of God, when the Spirit of God gives life to a dead sinner, there is a new citizen of the kingdom of God who never lived before.

There's life where there was no life before. A living person comes into the family of God who was not there before. John said, "*We have passed from death to life (we've been born of God).*"

"We've been translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son."
"There's joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth;" (a new life lives that never lived before).

Where there was death there's now life, where there was darkness, there's now light. Do you see that? In that way, the spiritual birth is like the natural birth; it's a new life. It's not the old life we model or renew or reform; it's a brand new life. It's a life of God.

Thirdly: Both in the natural birth and in the spiritual birth a like life is created, (l-i-k-e l-i-f-e)

Now my friend; every child has a father. And every child has the same life as the father who begat him. Now, we can take that down to the flowers; every flower comes from a seed. And every animal comes from an animal's seed. And every human being comes from a human seed.

If you will read **Genesis 1:24** several times the Lord says this: "*Everything will bring forth after his kind.*" You can have Shetland ponies and thoroughbred racers and all types of horses, Tennessee walking horses, but a horse is a horse and a cow is a cow. No cow never gave birth to a horse.

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And you can have sheep dogs and you can have Saint Bernard dogs and Poodle dogs and Airedale dogs and all different kind of dogs but a dog is a dog. No cat ever gave birth to a dog.

You see, like life; it comes forth in the natural birth: *“That which is born of flesh is flesh.”* Do you see that? So, I am born like my father. So, my father gave me his likeness in the natural birth. I am a human being because I came from a human father.

So, in the new birth, in regeneration, the Father lives in the child. We are born of God. We have the nature of God. We have the likeness of God. *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”*

“In Adam we die; in Christ we are made alive. As we have borne the image of the earthy, (Adam) so we bear the image of the heavenly, the Lord Jesus Christ.” There’s a like life. In the natural birth there is a like life brought forth, in the spiritual birth, if you are born of God.

Now, if some false prophet gave you what you have religiously, you will be like him. If some church gave you your religious position, you will be like that church. But, if God, if you were born of God, if you were born of the Spirit of God, you have a spiritual nature and a spiritual life; you are like your heavenly Father.

Dead men bring forth dead children, spiritually dead. The living Father brings forth living sons. God is a Spirit and so are they who are born of God. They are born spiritually.

Fourthly: In the natural birth and in the spiritual birth there’s character communicated!

In other words, **Psalm 51:5** says this; now watch it carefully: *“Behold, (and this is the amplified version), behold I was brought forth in a state of iniquity because my mother who conceived me was sinful; then I too am sinful.”*

Now, listen to **Psalm 58:3**: *“The ungodly are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they are born speaking lies,”* like father like son. You can’t get sweet water from a saltwater fountain. You can’t get clean water from a corrupt fountain.

We are born of our natural fathers with a natural life and attendance in a sin because our fathers are sinners. We are born with an evil nature just like our father Adam. We are all sons of Adam.

So it is in the new birth. Now watch this carefully! When a man is born of God he is given in that new birth a holy nature, a divine nature that will believe God, which will love God, which will trust God and that will not sin.

The nature of flesh can do no good. *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”* Paul said: *“In the flesh no man can please God.”* Paul said, *“In my flesh dwelleth no good thing.”* The fleshly nature retains the potential to sin and the passion to sin and the desire to sin.

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But that new nature born of the Spirit of God, born of the Word of God, and born by the power of God is a divine, holy nature and whosoever is born of God doth not practice sin for God's nature abides in him.

This is **1 John 3:9** in the amplified version; listen to it: *“Whosoever is born of God doth not habitually practice sin for God's nature abides in him. He cannot practice sin because he is born of God.”* In every believer there is a divine, holy, nature. It's a character.

Now, in the natural birth; I know it's mysterious. I know that in the natural birth we have a father who begat us and a like life was begotten. And a character was begotten and that character was the character of sin.

You don't have to teach your children to do evil; they are born knowing how to do evil. They are born experts at lying. They are born experts at selfishness and self-righteousness, pride and all of these things. That's born in us.

When we are born of God in this mysterious supernatural miracle from heaven, when a man is born of God, a like life is created. He is like his Father. *“That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* It's not flesh, its spirit!

And it's a character communicating, positioned in Christ. We have a righteousness imputed but practically in Christ we have a holiness imputed. And in that believer there is a nature that's holy and they cannot sin.

And that nature believes that Jesus is the Christ: *“Whosoever is born of God believes that Jesus is the Christ. And whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.”*

And that new nature overcomes the world, yes it does, it overcomes the world because *“whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.”* That new nature loves those that are begotten of God: *“He that loveth, the one that begat, loves those that are begotten.”* That's what it says in **1 John 5**: *“And he loved the begetter.”*

It's a nature. It can't do anything else but love God because it is God Himself. That nature is God Himself. It's a like life and it's a character communicated.

Fifthly: In both the natural birth and the spiritual birth; this is the ways in which they are similar: A life is brought forth that is complete in all its parts.

Now, when that baby is born, they bring the baby to the mother. It has every part of a human being that it will ever have. That baby will never grow another finger. If it has eight fingers and two thumbs, or ten fingers on its hands; that is all it will ever have.

If it only has one arm; it will never grow another. If it has two arms it will never grow a third. It will never grow another leg, another foot, or another toe. It will never grow anything else as far as this body is concerned. It's got ears, a nose, and that's exactly what it will have.

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Now, it has these faculties and these organs in the infant state. They are all there but they are in the infant state. They are growing and they will mature to a full grown man.

Now listen to me; when a child of God is born in the kingdom of God, that child of God has every faculty, spiritual faculty, he will ever have.

He's got faith, he's got love, he's got joy, he's got hope, he's got kindness, and he's got meekness and gentleness. He's got humility, tenderness, and all this grace and fruit of the Holy Spirit; it's already there because the life of God is there and it is the fruit of the spirit, the Spirit is there.

"If any man hath not the Spirit of God, he is none of his." That's what it says. And if I have the Spirit of God then I have the fruit of the Spirit, I have the life of the Spirit, and I have the character of the Spirit.

Now, it's there in infancy, *"as new born babes we are babes in Christ."* We are born babes in Christ. There are babes in Christ, there are young men in Christ, and there are elders in Christ. And these babes in Christ must grow.

But, when we are born again, we are sufficient. *"He hath made us meet (or sufficient) to inherit all that the saints in glory shall ever enjoy."* The same love that you have in your heart right now is the love you will share with the redeemed in glory. Oh, it will be increased. It will be glorified; we are going to be like Christ but you have the same love right now.

There is a remarkable likeness between the natural birth and the new birth. In other words, you would not be here right now if you had not been born, would you? Well, you will not be in the kingdom of God if you are not born again. Christ said that: *"Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

You wouldn't be able to hear or to see or to think if you hadn't been born would you? And you won't be able to hear His voice or see His face or think on His glory if you are not born again. You wouldn't be able to enjoy the things of this world and there are some good things here that God has made if you were not born, would you? And you will never enjoy the things of God's kingdom if you are not born again.

So, in that way the natural birth and the spiritual birth are similar, but there are several ways in which they are not alike at all. In fact, they are opposite. Would you bear with me while I point out some of these three or four ways in which the natural birth and the spiritual life's birth are nothing alike; they are totally opposite?

First of all: These two verses are different, different in this respect: In **1 Peter 1:23**; listen to this in **1 Peter 1:23**; this is the amplified version; you follow along in your King James. I want to read the amplified version and it will help you here I think to understand what the apostle is

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saying: “You have been born again not from mortal or corruptible seed or sperm, but you have been born again from a seed or sperm that is incorruptible, the Word of God.”

Do you see the difference in the natural birth and the new birth? In the natural birth we were born of corruptible sperm or seed; our father’s corruptible seed. *“In sin my mother conceived me. I was shapen in iniquity.”* It was a sinful seed.

But, we were born the second time, and do you know what the seed was in the second birth? The Holy Spirit was the agent. The Holy Spirit is the one who affected the birth, who beget us.

The angel said, *“Mary would have a child.”* She said, *“How can that be; I don’t know a man?”* And the angel said, *“The Spirit of God shall come upon you. The power of the highest shall overshadow thee and that which shall be born in thee shall be called the Son of God.”* That’s what happens when God brings forth a child into his kingdom, the new birth; the Holy Spirit is the agent.

But, you know the seed is the Word of God: *“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation.”* Men must and will hear the Gospel if they live, for Christ is the Gospel.

“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

It’s the Word of God that convicts a man of sin. It’s the Word of God that reveals Christ as the Saviour. It’s the Word of God that reveals to us *“the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”* It’s the Word of God that reveals to us the promise of God, of life to all who believe.

It’s the Word of God that reveals to us the beauty and glory of our Redeemer. It’s the Word of God that reveals to us the hope of eternal life. We are born of the Spirit and of the word. Please don’t separate that.

It’s a dreadful mistake and a dreadful error and it’s not glorifying to the Holy Spirit to deprive the Holy Spirit of the very Word, the very seed, the very sperm by which the new life is created, *“the incorruptible seed, the word of God.”* *“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”*

And *“without faith no man can please God.”* He that cometh to God must believe. The Holy Spirit doesn’t believe for you; you believe. That’s right! He says: *“With your mouth you confess and with your heart you believe.”*

Secondly: Here’s another way in which those two verses are different, **Job chapter 3:1;** now listen to this: *“After this Job opened his mouth and he cursed the day he was born.”* And he said, *“Let the day perish wherein I was born”*

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My friend, a man may live to see the day when he will curse the day that he was born. That's right, he may do it! Unfortunately, I think many will. They will live to curse the day that they announced that "*a child is born*" through your mother and father.

But, I will tell you this; it's not so in the new birth. That great day grows sweeter day by day, sweeter as the years go by.

I'm so glad that the Lord Jesus came one day and gave me life and I'm so glad that he came one day and revealed Himself to my heart. I'm so glad He came one day and said: "*Let there be life.*" I will never regret the day I was born spiritually and nobody ever has.

And I will tell you, parents, and this is unfortunate, but I know some parents who regret the day some of their children were born. But, the heavenly Father never regrets the day that His children came into His family.

They will always be trophies of His grace. He will always exalt the riches of the glory of His grace in every one of His children because they are all going to do Him proud. They are all going eternally to glorify His name, every one of them.

Thirdly: Here is another way in which they are not alike. In **Hebrews Chapter 9:27**; "*It's appointed unto men once to die.*"

In other words, when that baby comes into the world, the first time its heart beats is one heartbeat nearer to the grave than it was. Somebody said, "The beats of our hearts are like funeral marches taking us to the cemetery, every heartbeat, every breath, and every year."

We are going to die and you are going to die. Everybody born into this world is going to die. "*It's appointed unto men once to die*" and men have always died and always will until Christ comes.

But, it's not so in the new birth. We will never die. Now, we will sleep but it's not death for the believer to die. Christ said, "*Because I live ye shall live; for me to live is Christ and to me to die is gain.*"

It's Graduation Day and its Coronation Day; it's the day when I leave the land of the dead and go to land of the living. That's what somebody said to an old, dying, and saint of God one time. They stood by his bed and watched him.

And just before he died somebody said: "Well brother, you are about to leave the land of the living." And he looked up and smiled and he said, "Oh no." He said, "I'm about to leave the land of the dead; I'm going to the land of the living."

You see, that's the difference. We are born and this flesh is withering, wrinkled, dying, and decaying but not my spirit. Why not? Well, there are several reasons why this new nature born of God shall never die:

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First: It's from His nature; "*we are born of God.*"

The reason my flesh is dying is because I was born of a dying father. My father's dead, his father's dead. Henry Mahan was my grandfather; he's dead and my father's dead and soon I will be dead.

But, my heavenly Father eternally lives. I am born of Him the second time and therefore I can never die. Over me the second death has no power; I cannot die because I am born of God. A living God produces a living son.

Second: This nature born of the Spirit of God can never die because of its union with Christ!

My friend, we are not only born of God but we are one with Christ. We are married to Christ. The two have become one. Where He is I am. What He is I am. What He has I have. I can't die because Christ lives, I live. When He dies I will die for He can never die, He's eternal, then I can never die, I'm eternal.

**“And nearer, so nearer to God
Nearer I cannot be,
When in the person of His Son
I'm as near as He.”**

This nature can never die because of the pledge of the Lord. Listen to what he says: "*My sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.*" The Word has gone forth from the throne of our God,: "*They shall never perish*" and He cannot lie!

“My Father which gave them me is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand.” They shall never die!

Here's the last way in which this new birth and the fleshly birth are not alike and that is:

Fourthly: The glory of the fleshly birth!

Wherein does the glory of the fleshly birth lie? Well, in strength; a lot of people brag about their strength, they can lift so much weight or run so many miles in so many minutes. They are proud of their strength.

Some people are proud of their beauty, their glory and life in their beauty. Some men have got a lot of money and they are proud of that. Some men have got a lot of brains and they are proud of that.

The glory of the flesh is in the flesh and all of this is like the grass of the field, "*it withereth and the flower fadeth away.*"

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Beauty; you are going to be ugly someday. Strong man; you are going to be weak. Rich man; you are going to be poor. Wise man; you are going to be a fool. *“But the glory of God endureth forever.”*

And the glory of the new birth is the glory of God!