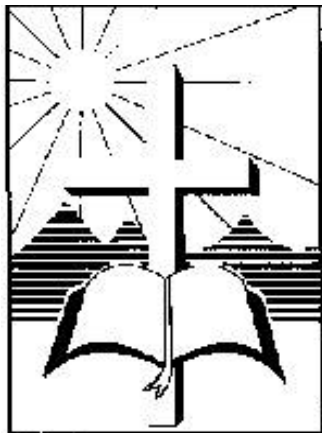


LESSON 1



EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN

Scripture Texts: Jeremiah 13:23; John 1:1-13, 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:3-4

In this set of lessons we will look at some essentials of salvation—requirements without which there is no salvation. Each of these, many of which may be called "exceptions," is a supernatural work of God in the heart. Our part is to obey Him.

Skilled workmen know they must follow certain procedures exactly or fail. Trained workmen and precision tools are required for many jobs. Natural laws are sought and followed. Spiritual laws are just as exact.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

John 3:3

The Necessity of Rebirth

Have we not heard, "It does not matter where we worship, just so one is sincere" or "We are all going to the same place; we are all brothers" or "Everyone has a right to his belief; one is as good as another"? Are these statements true? There is ONE way to spiritual life—the RIGHT way. It is given in the Bible. Wrong directions and ignorant guidance have resulted in the loss of many a soul. To follow opinions of men rather than God's essentials of truth is tragic.

Since all have sinned (Romans 3:23), therefore all come under the truth of the statement found in Jeremiah 13:23. We cannot do good. By man's standards there seems to be unsaved people doing good all about us. How about God's standard? There is none good but God, as written in Luke 18:19. God counts nothing as good except that which proceeds from Him.

A natural, unsaved one is a dead soul. A reborn one is alive, with God living within him. We cannot rid ourselves from sin because it is a part of us as much as spots are a part of the leopard. The only way that we can be rid of the spots of sin is to have them removed by the miraculous work of God through the new birth, or rebirth, that makes us new persons, as we read in John 3:3. By being born again we enter the Kingdom of God—and in no other way. This is a divine change.

The Way of Rebirth

John 14:6 plainly tells us that rebirth, spiritual birth, comes through one Person and one only—Jesus Christ who is God. He gave His life on the Cross, which enabled Him to give mankind a new life, a new birth. He died so that we may live. We become sons of God, not by natural birth but by spiritual birth into God's family. To do this, we must receive Christ by repenting and believing the Gospel, as we read in Mark 1:15. Repentance is turning from sin in heartfelt sorrow. The Gospel tells us to believe on Christ's name. This includes believing His identity as God, believing that He, through the sacrifice of His life, can and will save us from sin, and trusting Him to save us.

The Result of Rebirth

Second Corinthians 5:17 expresses the truth that if any man be in Christ, is born again, actually living in Christ, then he is a new creature. He has new life, at first a babe in Christ, then growing to a mature Christian. Many have joined a church but have never been born from above. Often they live good lives by worldly standards, but they have not been taught the truth of the Scriptures, which teach that they must become new creatures, not just good people. Whose plan is "church joining"? How does it compare with the new birth? Is "church joining" biblical?

First John 3:9 tells us that whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. Some teach that there are two types of sinners: "saved sinners" and "unsaved sinners." In 1 John 3:10 we find that God counts all sinners as children of the devil. Sin is a nature separated from God, a disposition to disobey God. The new birth puts in one the nature of God, godliness, and obedience to Him.

Begun here, the godly life is to go on after death. To be born of God starts one toward everlasting life in Heaven. The new birth gives LIFE, HOLINESS (which is sinlessness and godliness), and FUTURE HOPE. There can be no future hope without a new life and holiness. Is it worth suffering for?

JUST A THOUGHT

Almost anything can be bought at a reduced price

except lasting satisfaction.