

The Fall of Man – Teacher’s Guide

Understanding the nature of man, the nature of God, and the nature of Satan and what happened to our foreparents in the Garden of Eden is critical to a knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The epic tragedy of what occurred that day in the Garden forever set the destiny of mankind. The understanding of this calamity sheds light on the significance and absolute necessity of the atoning sacrifice and grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Creation

Why did God create man in his image?

- Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." Genesis 1:26 (NIV)

What was the first commandment God gave to man?

- "God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Genesis 1:28

In Genesis chapter 1 what do we learn about the inherent traits God has given man?

- Man would have the ability and desire to govern and rule and bring into subjection all creation under the will of God
- He would have the desire for sex and ability to procreate in order to fulfill the commandment of God to subdue the earth

What do we learn about the nature of man, before Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit?

- Man could think and had vast intelligence (gave names to all animals created – Genesis 2:19)
- He had the ability to express love and intimacy (Genesis 2:23)
- There was no shame of their nakedness,
- There was no fear of the serpent or any of God’s creations
- He had a free will to obey God’s commandments or to disobey
- There was a desire to have wisdom (Genesis 3:6)
- There was the ability to perceive beauty and employ reasoning (Eve saw the fruit was delightful to the eyes and good for food)

- God called them good (Hebrew OT definition of good: “beautiful”)
- They were in fellowship with God (they walked and talked together)
- The Lord commanded them and they called him Jehovah God.

COMMENTARY

All man’s traits and nature created by God were called “good.” The Hebrew for the word “good” used here is defined as “beautiful.” When we consider the nature of God, as revealed in the Scripture, we learn that God is wisdom (Proverbs 4), and God is love (1 John 4:16). The desire for wisdom and the relationship between Adam and Eve as husband and wife was therefore natural and good.

In order to fulfill the first commandments of God the Lord made man without fear, so he could rule and subdue God’s creations. Man would have a mind that could reason and have free will to make decisions, he was not an automaton – a programmed robot or like an animal governed and limited by instincts.

Man’s desires for wisdom, to rule, for sex were natural, and were to be satisfied according to the will and law of God as he grew in maturity and fellowship with the Lord.

The Garden

How is Satan, the Devil described in the Scriptures?

- He is called the “father of lies,” “a murderer,” “does not abide in the truth,” (John 8:44), “the deceiver of the whole world” (Revelations 12:9); “the evil (wicked) one” (Matthew 13:38); “enemy of righteousness” (Acts 13:10); “the accuser of our brothers” (Revelation 12:10) a “thief that comes to steal, kill and destroy” (John 10:10); he will proclaim himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:4); he desires to be worshipped as if he were God (Matthew 4:9); “the power of darkness” (Colossians 1:13)
- Belial, an appellation (name) of Satan stresses his deep-seated wickedness – “the one who is utterly worthless because vile.” (2 Corinthians 6:14-15)
- Satan is in essence the opposite of God. God is light, life, love and truth. The Devil is darkness, death, hate and deceit. He is the enemy of God and desires to destroy and drag with him to hell all that was made in the image and likeness of God. “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” (Revelation 12:12)

What comprises the parts of man that God created? (See Luke 10:27)

- “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27
- Man had a soul, a spirit, a mind and a body. In the Scriptures we see the word “heart” refer not to the physical organ, but to “man’s spirit”
- **Greek NT definition *soul*** : “the breath of life; the vital force”; the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions; the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death
- **Greek NT definition *heart***: "the affective center of our being" and the capacity of moral preference (volitional desire, choice; denotes the seat and center of all physical and spiritual life; the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors)
- **Greek NT definition *mind***: the understanding, the faculty and seat of intelligence; understanding, intellect, mind, insight – reasoning. (will has some element here as in spirit)
- **Greek NT definition *strength***: “ability, might, power, strength”

COMMENTARY

The soul was Adam’s consciousness, the thing that made him human. He could think, ponder, and feel emotion, and had a mind to make decisions. He had vast intelligence (e.g., ability to name thousands of animals – Genesis 2:19). These faculties and attributes were created in man so he could take authority and rule over God’s creations on earth.

A man's soul is what separates him from an animal and beast of the field. Man could have fellowship with God. Adam could talk to God. He knew God was his creator.

The soul is used in different contexts in the bible. In one sense it is man's consciousness, the knowing that he is alive, awareness of self and the world and God. His life force in other words; the breath of life. In another context it is used to describe the entire person (e.g., the soul that sinneth it shall die" – Ezekiel 18:4).

In the context of Luke 10:27 what is the difference between the heart and the mind?

- If we define "heart" as the "spirit of man," it is that part of a man which guides and influences his thoughts, feelings, drives, and will. It is that part of man which shapes his personality.
- The mind is the understanding and reasoning center of the soul. The spirit of a man can influence the mind. It can blind the mind's ability to reason and understand. It can also create fear causing the mind to think irrationally. It can also cause the mind to consider that which supersedes the mind's conscience and societal or God's laws.

Why did God allow the serpent in the Garden?

- To test the obedience of Adam and Eve.
- Great authority and blessing would be handed to our fore parents, to rule over all God's creations on the earth. And thus the Lord as we see in the test of Abraham's faith, prepares his servants through trials that refine us and bring us ever closer to trust and obedience in His word. Even the Lord Jesus, before he began his earthly ministry was tested in the wilderness by the Devil himself.
- The Lord never yielded to Satan's temptations because he trusted in the word of God as evidenced when he rebuked Satan three times by reciting Scripture – God's Word. Adam and Eve did yield to temptation because they didn't trust in the word and commandments of God.

What choice did the Lord set before Adam and Eve?

- Life (tree of life) or death (tree of knowledge of good and evil)

What happened to Adam when he ate the forbidden fruit?

- "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths." Genesis 3:7 "And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."
- There was a change in his mind (perception and reasoning). He saw himself as naked. He perceived himself to be in a different state of being than before.
- Adam then reasoned that being naked, a state of being God had called good, was now bad and humiliating.
- There was a change in his spirit. For the first time he experienced shame and fear. And his fear caused him to act in a way he never had; he hid from God

- And then Adam blamed God for his transgression: “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” (Genesis 3:12). He took no personal responsibility for his transgression.

COMMENTARY

What we find here is Adam transitioning from a state of fellowship where he abided in the glory of God, as a son of God, and was called “beautiful,” to the state of a “sinner.” When one transgresses the commandments of God, which is sin, automatically fellowship is broken with God. When Adam broke the commandment to not eat the forbidden fruit, two things happened. First, he was exposed to his true state, without God he was naked and a creature made from dust. This was the message Christ delivered to the church at Laodicea that had strayed from God: “...you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked” (Revelation 3:17).

Covered by the Shekinah glory of God, Adam was beautiful but once he sinned and the glory of God was removed, Adam saw he was wretched and naked and felt ashamed.

Then the second thing that happened to Adam was the most nefarious thing that damned the entire human race. When he ate the fruit, the spirit of the Devil, Satan was joined to his soul.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is translated from Hebrew as the “tree of acquaintance with beauty and misery/affliction/distress; acquaintance with both God and the Devil.

The initial manifestation we see of the traits of Satan in Adam is his slanderous accusation against the Lord. Satan is called the “accuser” of the brethren (Revelations 12:10). Then we observe Adam had a spirit of fear. The Scriptures state a spirit of fear is not from the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17, John 3:20, Romans 8:15). Therefore the spirit of fear that fell upon Adam was from the Devil.

However, it would not be until the first generation of children and then in all the other generations that followed Adam and Eve, where we would see the full manifestation of what would become the human spirit. A spirit created from the Devil; that fell upon the soul created in the image and likeness of God.

Adam’s new nature we are then told in Scripture would be hostile to God and could never accept God’s laws. Why? Because it born of the Devil himself, evil incarnate, and God’s ancient foe.

What was the penalty and outcome of Adam’s transgression?

- Genesis 2:17 – “...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Death would not only be physical, but the soul, was condemned as well (“the soul that sinneth it shall die” – Ezekiel 18:4)
- When they were cast out Adam and Eve were blocked from the Tree of Life and denied immortality. (Genesis 3:22) Thus the body would perish. This is the first death. But the soul, made in the image of God, still lived. The Scriptures then say there will be a Day of Judgment, where all souls will be judged. On this day the sons of disobedience will experience a “second death.” (Revelation 2:13) This second death our Lord Jesus calls “Hell.”

- Hell, the lake of fire prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). It is here the death of the soul takes place. Death is described here as eternal separation from God and eternal misery and torment.

The Fall

How would the Scriptures describe all the children of Adam and Eve, including you and me, as a result of the fall of Adam?

- The Scriptures would now describe Adam's children, you and I, as "sinners," "ungodly," and "wicked;" as having a "depraved" and "corrupt mind;" "detestable;" "enemies" of God; and under the "wrath of God." (Romans 4:5, 5:6, 5:9,10; 1 Timothy 6:5; Titus 1:16)
- The spirit that came into Adam and Eve was born of the Devil. (*Ephesians 2:2, 1 John 3:8*) All the offspring of Adam, including you and me, would be called children of the Devil, children of disobedience, the offspring of deceit, and the children of wrath. (*Isaiah 57:4, Ephesians 5:6*). And who is called the father of deceit? The Devil himself.

COMMENTARY

Injected into the very DNA of Adam was a spirit that corrupted humanity. This spirit, this human spirit now separated Adam from God. It would lead man away from God, and to do what was right in his own mind. (*Isaiah 53:6*) What God had created pure and innocent was now tainted with evil. And God abhorred what we had become. (*Ezekiel 16:4*)

Man now had a conscience, an internal voice that decided right and wrong - apart from God. Man would now act based on his own values, desires and perceptions. In this sense the serpent was right; Eve would "become like God." Man would not be subject to the law of God nor could he be. Adam and Eve now had a spirit of independence. A spirit of a rebel, a spirit of disobedience that separated them from the King. Therefore, the penalty for rebellion, the penalty for sin was death.

How does the Bible describe the human nature?

- Romans 8:7 "That is why the mind that focuses on human nature is hostile toward God. It refuses to submit to the authority of God's Law because it is powerless to do so." ISV
- "Because the mind of the flesh is hatred toward God, for it is not subject to the law of God because it cannot be." Aramaic Bible
- "This is so because the corrupt nature has a hostile attitude toward God. It refuses to place itself under the authority of God's standards because it can't." God's Word Translation
- "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." AKJV

Why does the Bible say the heart is deceitful and wicked and who can know it but God? Explain how this affects seekers of God and salvation

- Jeremiah 17:9 - "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" The NIV translation of this text says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" If we substitute "spirit of man" for heart we can understand this verse. The spirit of man is deceitful and born in the image of the "father of deceit." The goal of

the Devil is to kill and destroy man who was made in the image and likeness of God, his enemy. He does this by several ways:

- The heart blinds the minds of unbelievers so they will not understand the truth and repent unto God (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- The heart leads astray seekers of truth by providing false teachers, false gospels, false churches, and false leaders. The blind leading the blind will both fall into the pit, the Scriptures state. These are given false assurances of eternal life from the traditions of men, yet they have no assurance from God.
- The heart tries to take away the fear of God and make professors of faith believe they can have fellowship with God and still walk in darkness and in remain in their sin.
- And then the heart tries to nullify the Word of God, so that having heard the truth, the person never prepares himself for the coming of the Lord and is shut out from the Kingdom of God. (Parable of the foolish virgins).

Why was Adam's new nature "enmity" (hostile) towards God?

- Romans 8:5-8 – "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To focus our minds on the human nature leads to death, but to focus our minds on the Spirit leads to life and peace. That is why the mind that focuses on human nature is hostile toward God. It refuses to submit to the authority of God's Law because it is powerless to do so. Indeed, those who are under the control of human nature cannot please God."
- Adam's spirit was born of the Devil, Satan. We are told Satan is the enemy of God (Revelation 12:7) and in him there is nothing but evil.
- Satan is the author of that proud, carnal disposition which there is in ungodly men; he rules in the hearts of men. From Scripture it is clear, that whether men have been most prone to sensual or to spiritual wickedness, all men, being naturally children of disobedience, are also by nature children of wrath. (Matthew Henry Commentary)

What do we learn about God's nature from the fall of Adam?

- God hates sin. He hates it just as much in a son of God as he does in the vilest heathen.
- "And as for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born." Ezekiel 16:4
- Yes dear friend, the Lord says you and I were abhorred on the day we were born, because our souls were defiled with evil. "...every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood." (Genesis 8:21) The human spirit was hostile, an enemy of God. As a consequence, the Lord Jesus

called the people “dead.” (Matthew 8:22) The wrath of God was upon the world. And death was the decree.

- Throughout the Scriptures we are taught that God is holy, that he demands perfect obedience and purity. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD." (Isaiah 55:8) He commands that his children be “holy as he is holy.” (Leviticus 11:44, 1 Peter 1:14) The holy one is set apart for God’s use, without blemish or defect, and free from sin.
- “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.” Proverbs 16:6

COMMENTARY

The man who says “I am a good person,” or “I have done nothing wrong,” sees himself through the lens of his own conscience – his spirit. “There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, Yet is not washed from his filthiness.” (Proverbs 30:12) He says he has lived a moral life, or a life doing good things for others. He believes there are many paths to heaven, nirvana, and peace. This man has declared in his own mind what is good. And by default, calls God Almighty “a liar” and unjust. (1 John 1:10)

That man has defied God who has proclaimed “all have sinned.” (Romans 3:23) He has called the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for sinners unnecessary, and he tramples on the blood of the Son of God. To these “good” people the Lord says: “And yet you say, 'I have done nothing wrong. Surely God isn't angry with me!' But now I will punish you severely because you claim you have not sinned.” (Jeremiah 2:35)

On the Day of Judgment “good” people will be asked one question: “Did you love the Lord God, with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? And did you love your neighbor as yourself?” (Matthew 22:36) And who is your neighbor? Everyone you have met in life. How will you answer? With every fiber of your being, did you give your all to obey, love and serve God Almighty? Did you love all people, or were some despised and ignored?

There is only one person who lived that can say “yes” to God’s greatest commandment. The Son of God, Jesus Christ. He who had no sin. (2 Corinthians 5:21) It would seem we are all without hope. Our fate is Hell, the lake of fire where the worms that eat the body do not die, and the fire is never quenched. (Mark 9:48) Thus we cry as did the prophet Isaiah, "Woe is me! For I am undone." (Isaiah 6:5)

What would come out of man’s new heart or spirit after the fall of Adam?

- *Romans 1:29* – “They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and hatred. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful. They invent new forms of evil; they disobey their parents. They are senseless, faithless, heartless, merciless.”
- *2 Corinthians 12:20* – “I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, rage, rivalry, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder. I am afraid that when I come again, my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of their acts of impurity, sexual immorality, and debauchery.”

- *Galatians 5:19* - The acts of the flesh (human spirit) are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and sorcery; hatred, discord, jealousy, and rage; rivalries, divisions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- *Revelations 21:8* - But to the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and sexually immoral and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This is the second death.”

Redemption

How does God show his mercy to Adam and the generations that would follow?

- Despite the woes of man, the Scriptures describe the mercy and compassion of God Almighty. “And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.” (Genesis 3:21) After they were cast out of the Garden, no longer clothed in his glory, the Lord still cared for Adam and Eve.
- Cain, the first son, the Apostle John tells us belonged to the Devil. (1 John 3:12) “By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.” (Ephesians 2:3) “For I was born a sinner--yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.” (Psalm 51:5) However, their second son Abel, the Lord God called righteous. (Matthew 25:35) How was this? What did Abel do that freed him from sin? Was it because he sacrificed a lamb to God? Was it by chance he was born innocent and pure, without the spirit of Adam?
- For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.” Romans 9:14
- Not deserving a pardon, the Lord declares Abel righteous by virtue of his mercy – not by any action of Abel. The Lord shows us there is yet hope for mankind. However, the righteousness of a holy God demands that sin be punished and the unclean be destroyed. So how could God be just and the justifier of the wicked? How could Abel be declared righteous?
- The heavens and the earth would be witness to an act of love never seen. To satisfy his judgment on the soul that sins, the Lord God would take the arrow aimed at every human heart, bare his breast and plunge the dagger into himself. The Lord Jesus would drink the full cup of God's wrath. (Matthew 26:39)
- My God, my God, look oh man on what the Lord has done. “For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.” Hebrews 9:14

COMMENTARY

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) A proper reading of this verse is critical to understanding the mercy of God. “Jesus Christ gave his life for those who would come to know and love God, so they that love God would have eternal life.”

The sacrifice of Christ for sin offers no benefit to the unrepentant. It brings salvation only to those who turn to God. “But wait a minute,” you might say, “doesn't the text say I only have to believe in Christ? Where does it say I have to repent and love God to receive eternal life?”

The Greek translation for “believe” in this verse means “trust in, have faith in, to be persuaded by.” The Lord Jesus tells us plainly what it means to trust him. “Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.” (John 14:21)

So what were the commandments given by Christ? What did he preach? There were only two great messages preached to sinners by the Lord, “repent or perish” and “love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.” Those that believed in Christ both repented (turned from the world to God), and loved the Lord (obedient).

To receive salvation what does the Lord command?

- Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ
- Dear friend, nothing could be plainer, the Kingdom of Heaven is for those who love God. Men and women who turn from the desires of their heart, to seek God in utter and complete surrender. These believe and trust in the Son of God. Thus the Lord describes the love of God as consuming, all-encompassing, and the forsaking of all things.
- “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.” (Matthew 13:45)
- Beloved, the kindness and love of the Almighty is meant to bring us to repentance. (Romans 2:4) To that place in our renewed hearts, where broken in spirit and humbled in mind, we say “Lord Jesus I love thee, my life I give, not by my strength but by thy mercy I received.”

COMMENTARY

By this point I pray you have a revelation of the dire strait of mankind. The situation you are in. I pray you can see that no religion can save your soul. Only an act of God, the mercy of the Lord can save men from their fate.

I know a man who attended church for 40 years and who declared himself safe from Hell because “he decided to become a Christian.” He assumed he was in control of his fate. Yet, when I talked to him about the Lord, he said “Who can know God, he is invisible?!” He was blind to a knowledge of God. The Lord did not know him and he did not know the Lord. This man was on a cruise liner named religion. It had music, fellowship, and activity. Sweet words filled his cabin, saying Jesus loved him. It was a ship headed towards disaster and tragedy.

It was this man, and many others like him, the Lord Jesus warned in these parables: the 10 virgins (Matthew 25:1), the talents (Matthew 25:14), the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31), the rich young man (Matthew 19:16), the wedding feast (Matthew 22:1) and those who called him “Lord, Lord” (Matthew 7:21).

In each story the characters sought to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. One obeyed the Ten Commandments, some lived a religious life, others communed in church, and many believed that Jesus was the Son of God. Listen to their testimony on the Day of Judgment: “Did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?” “We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.” (Matthew 7:22, Luke 13:26)

In every case Christ called these people “worthless,” “foolish,” “law breakers” or said “I never knew you.” Not one could testify they loved God with all their heart. No one knew the Lord, and he did not know them.

Dear friend, this is the anguish of my soul tonight. I have seen the devastation to come. The unfathomable disappointment. The horror on the faces of those denied the Kingdom. This is why I write, by the grace of God, that some may be saved.

Does God know you?

In his parables the Lord Jesus says “I never knew you” and “get away from me” to those banging on the doors of Heaven. (Matthew 7:23) The Greek word for “knew” used in this text is *ginóskō*. It is the same Greek word used by Mary when the angel of God told her she would bear a son called Jesus, and Mary responded unto the angel, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” Luke 1:34

The word “know” used in both verses implies a sexual intimacy. Dear friend you must catch this, it is the difference between eternal life and eternal misery. This is the difference between professing Christians who are called “worthless” (Matthew 25:30), and those who belong to Christ.

The children of God are entered into by the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of God, the seed of Christ, comes into those God has forgiven of sin and gives them a new heart, a new spirit. This was the only remedy for the children of Adam when he became corrupt in the Garden. The only hope for you and me.

Regeneration

Those who were awakened to their true condition, who saw themselves as God saw them, sinful and dying, and turned to God for mercy would experience a miracle. Washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ, the repentant would receive a new spirit. He would be “born again.” (John 3:3)

“At that time the Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a different person.” (1 Samuel 10:6)

And they would be made clean and pure. Thus the Lord Jesus could say, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8) And the Psalmist could cry “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10) (Substitute “spirit” for “heart” and you can understand why man needs a radical change to be pleasing to God)

“As all of us reflect the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, we are becoming more like him with ever-increasing glory by the Lord's Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” (Romans 8:29)

It is the Spirit of Christ that turns the ungodly into a lover of God. Thus the Lord Jesus could call you his brother and sister. And God the Father could call you his son and daughter and a joint heir with Christ. (Galatians 4:7)

Those that receive the Spirit of Christ become intimate with God. These are the people the Lord knows. You will hear his voice, you will feel his presence and he will hear your prayers. “Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.” (Isaiah 58:9)

Beloved, the hand of God will be on you and you will be called blessed. The Apostle Paul describes this phenomenon as when a man joins with his wife and “the two become one flesh.” (Galatians 5:31) God declares that we are his and he is our God. “He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life

will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.” (2 Corinthians 5:15)

Why did Christ say you must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God?

- The nature of man, the human spirit, is corrupt and the only remedy is to put it to death. Jeremiah 17:9 says “the heart is beyond cure.” The spirit of man is the embodiment of evil, the reflection of the Devil. It cannot be rehabilitated. Therefore a new spirit is needed that is pure and clean. We receive the Spirit of Christ that we may be made into the image of Christ.
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-15- “What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? For what partnership can righteousness have with wickedness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?” Belial, an appellation (name) of Satan which stresses his deep-seated wickedness – “the one who is utterly worthless because vile.” What the Scriptures are saying here is that God, who is holy, by his nature cannot be reconciled unto evil.
- The Lord said only the pure of heart (spirit) shall see the face of God (Matthew 5:8). So something has to happen, something not from man, but from God: an act of God. Something supernatural. It must be the Spirit of Christ that comes into the soul that makes his soul pure in the sight of God. Man is reprieved from the penalty of sin (death) by the work of Christ on the cross, and then his heart is made pure and freed from the power of sin by the Spirit of Christ that comes in and abides in the soul of the repentant sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMENTARY

Is man capable of kindness and good deeds? Yes, for God made man in his likeness. However, man’s sin nature (thoughts and inclinations) would not be towards God’s laws, he would be subject to his own desires and perception of what is right and wrong. The essence of the human spirit is independence and rebellion against the rule of God. And such was the character of Satan who wanted to exalt himself in the place of God and was cast out of heaven. This is the very same nature in man. You, by nature desire to do what you please, and what is right in your own mind. You have exalted yourself to the place of God. And the penalty for rebellion is eternal separation from God, death and misery.

Satan could not be rehabilitated. Matthew 25:41 says an eternal fire is prepared for the Devil, his angels and all who have refused to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, all the children of the Devil, every human born of the spirit of the Devil will meet the same fate as their spiritual father. Thus the Lord Jesus said no one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven and see the face of God unless he is born again by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit.

The Doctrine of Total Depravity or Original Pollution describes man’s spiritual state. It states man in his fallen condition has no spiritual value in the sight of God. He is guilty and condemned by the law of God and under dominion of self, sin and Satan. Man is utterly helpless and has no appreciation of spiritual truth, he is blinded by Satan.

What is the result of the new birth?

- You abide in Christ and he abides in you
- You receive a new spirit, a new heart to love God and your neighbor
- You are changed into a different person
- You begin the process of transforming into the likeness of Jesus Christ
- You become wedded to God (joined in spirit)
- You desire to please God
- You hear the voice of Christ (My sheep hear my voice)
- You stop practicing sin (1 John 3:9)

COMMENTARY

Now when we are born again does the human spirit disappear? No, but we are no longer subject to its desires and power over our thoughts and actions. We may be tempted, but Christ gives us a way of escape and takes the desires of the world away. We now hate sin and desire to please God in all that we do. As we grow in Christ there will be battles that take place between the old man and the new. This is why the saints of Christ are called overcomers.

The power of the Spirit within gives us the ability to overcome the corrupted nature. Therefore Christ said you must take up your cross and follow me. Kill the ego within. How? It begins with conviction when the Lord lets us see the depravity of the human spirit. This leads to godly repentance and hatred of sin. Not the sin of others, per se, but the sin within our own soul. Through surrender to Christ, reckoning ourselves in union with him, in death, burial and resurrection we overcome the old man.

Why is it impossible for anyone to declare themselves a Christian based on their own decisions, energy, and will?

- Man cannot change his own nature. His very nature is corrupt and unclean in the eyes of God. No matter what good deeds a person may do, the nature of the Devil is in them; evil incarnate.
- God must take action for a sinner to be converted; regeneration is a supernatural act by God that puts His Spirit into a repentant sinner and makes him a new creation.
- John 6:44 – Our Lord said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

What is the difference between a sinner and a saint?

- *Sinner*: the mind is persuaded by the human spirit which is persuaded by the Devil, its father and god of the world according to Scripture.
- *Saint*: the person born of Christ is persuaded by God, the Holy Spirit (faith is the persuasion of God)

COMMENTARY

Dear friend, salvation is Jesus Christ; not a religion, not baptism, not a profession of faith. Christ comes into the blessed and gives life. This is a gift, an act of mercy and grace by God Almighty. This gives understanding to the verse, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) No one will see the face of God whose soul has not received the Spirit.

"Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5) Repentance (water) must come first, then the Spirit will be given. We hear this very thing from John the Baptist: "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11)

The Greek for "baptize" means immersed. Literally, one who turned to God would be immersed in his Spirit. And those who did not repent would be immersed in the fire of Hell.

When the Spirit of the Lord enters a man he becomes wedded to God. No longer a free spirit but a bondservant of Christ. Then a change in the mind and heart takes place. We now desire God, we want to please God. Things of the world no longer satisfy as they once did. We begin to see the evil and sin in our bodies. We mourn over sin that lingers, and mourn over those who are perishing. We have a thirst for the Lord and a meekness unto God that never existed.

The Lord Jesus came to save men and women, separated from God and enslaved to sin, from eternal death and affliction. The Lord came to deliver the remedy to what happened in the Garden of Eden. He came that we might have life, and have it abundantly.

The love of God

Earlier we said the Lord abhorred us at birth. (Ezekiel 16:4) But now we see his plan of redemption, his love for those who receive Christ. (Ezekiel 16:6-14)

"And as for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born."

"And when I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' I made you flourish like a plant of the field. And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full adornment. Your breasts were formed, and your hair had grown; yet you were naked and bare.

"When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord GOD, and you became mine."

"Then I bathed you with water and washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. I clothed you also with embroidered cloth and shod you with fine leather. I wrapped you in fine linen and covered

you with silk. And I adorned you with ornaments and put bracelets on your wrists and a chain on your neck. And I put a ring on your nose and earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head.

Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen and silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour and honey and oil. You grew exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty. And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor that I had bestowed on you, declares the Lord GOD.” (Ezekiel 16:4-14)

A crown of beauty

“You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.” (Isaiah 62:3) When Adam and Eve were created, the Lord called them beautiful. It is the desire of God to make us beautiful once again; to remove the stain of sin. To bestow on us the blessings of God, to make us radiant, and to sit us with the Lord Jesus.

“And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more nor mourning nor crying nor pain, they will be no more, because the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)

“And those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.” (Isaiah 35:10)

“And he who sits on the throne will give them shelter. They will never again be hungry or thirsty; they will never be scorched by the heat of the sun. For the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:15)

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)

The Lord did not come to make people rich, make peace on earth, create good will, feed starving children, clothe the poor, or create a religion. While we praise God for those who care for their neighbors, the Apostle Paul says “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners --and I am the worst of them all.” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Amen.