

## IS THE NEW BIRTH A PHYSICAL BIRTH?

Johnie Edwards

A Baptist preacher wrote concerning what it means to be born again: "...a person who is born physically by water must have a second birth spiritually speaking. For a person to be born again (saved) is done by the Holy Spirit. Unlike being born of water which indicated physical birth, the spiritual birth is invisible. Jesus compared the new birth to a wind". A reading of John 3:3-5 will not allow such! Nicodemus, like this Baptist preacher, thought it was a physical birth when he asked: "...How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (Jn. 3:4). To correct his misunderstanding about it being a physical birth, Jesus said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:5).

**THE NEW BIRTH IS SPIRITUAL.** The answer Jesus gave Nicodemus shows this to be a spiritual birth, not a physical one. Then Jesus said: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6).

**ONE BIRTH WITH TWO ELEMENTS.** This new birth is not two births, but one birth with two elements: "water and Spirit" (Jn. 3:5).

### THE HOLY SPIRIT USES

**THE WORD.** Peter penned: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Remember "the seed is the word of God" (Lk. 8:11). The word of God is the begetting power as Paul wrote: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15). James put it this way: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (Jas. 1:18). So, the work of the Holy Spirit in one's conversion is that He works through the word of God as a begetting agency.

**BORN OF WATER.** The only way that water is used in this spiritual birth is when one comes forth out of the waters of baptism. A good example can be seen when the eunuch and Philip, the evangelist (Acts 21:8), "went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:38-39). Isn't it strange how hard this Baptist preacher worked to get around what Jesus said? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16). By the way, there is no more

emphasis in the passage on the Spirit than on the water. They are of equal importance.

**THE WIND.** Just as one cannot see wind, one cannot see man's spirit which is involved in the new birth (Jn. 3:8).

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## CHILD DISCIPLINE

J.P. Edwards

Parents are responsible to provide the proper discipline in the home. Parents must give attention to the needs of the children in this respect.

Please notice some of the things the Old Testament writers had to say about discipline. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. 14:24). "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. 19:18). "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15). "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15). Just because these passages are in the Old Testament does not mean that they may not be used today! Children have not changed over the years; they still stand in need of correction. Paul wrote concerning the Old Testament scriptures, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,

that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

It is possible for parents to be overly rigid and unjust in discipline. Paul said, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). I'm not suggesting that parents be overly strict. Yet, children need the proper amount of discipline and reproof. It's very important for parents to be consistent with punishment. Inconsistent punishment will often do more harm than good.

Threats of discipline will truly spoil the child. The promise of discipline with no intention of giving it is deceptive. One parent said, "If you break that, I'll beat your head in". Surely you would not, and you know it and the child knows it. Parents set bad examples to their children with idle threats.

It's been said, "Blessed are strict parents: For they shall inherit orderly children" (Constance Schroeder). Let us not as parents neglect the needs of our precious children.

## LET EVERY MAN BE

Robert Jackson

Here is a charge from the pen of James that certainly deserves our attention (Jas. 1:19-20). It is one that every child of God ought to give heed unto. In fact, it is one EVERY MAN ought to lay to heart. Yet, it is a very plain command that has often been neglected and disobeyed by the majority of the people.

**SWIFT TO HEAR.** This shows that the ear is under subjection. One ought to be swift to hear what God speaks (Heb. 1:1-2). God has spoken, but how many are swift to hear what He has said. Is it not strange how men will be swift to hear what others say about salvation, rather than to hear what God has said. Someone said that God made man with two ears and that he ought to do a lot of listening. How about you? Do you listen to the counsel of the ungodly? Be swift to hear the things that are good for your soul.

**SLOW TO SPEAK.** This brings to our attention that the tongue is to be under subjection. How many people are guilty of speaking before they think. How many people are guilty of

speaking things they know nothing about. How many speak things about their neighbors and friends that are just based upon wrong judgment. How many people have been hurt and damaged for life just because some do not control the tongue. "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (Jas. 3:5).

**SLOW TO WRATH.** The temper is to be brought under subjection. What a shame to see a man that is not able to control his temper. Many people have been hurt...put to death in a fit of anger. Many churches have been divided over some brother unable to control his temper. Many homes have been divided because one of the parties have a temper that is not under subjection. Hear what Paul says about the matter in Ephesians 4:26, "Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Everyone should hear this.....this means preachers, elders, deacons, mothers, fathers, and the young.

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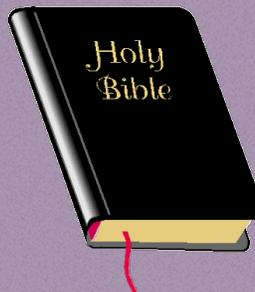
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