

Truth For The Final Generation

Chapter 10

The New Brand

Scripture Reading: John 3:3-10 (KJV) ³Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ⁸The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. ⁹Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? ¹⁰Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? ¹¹Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

As we continue our study of the true gospel of Messiah in the book of John, we shall discover that Messiah the greatest teacher, like all good teachers, has a trademark/signature expression, which, whenever He uses it, is designed to draw the attention of His listeners to a most precious and significant truth. The trademark/signature expression is, "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee/you,*" and it can be found twenty-five times in the book of John in the King James Version (KJV). The first use of the expression recorded by John is that found in **John 1:51** which says, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you,* Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." In our last study we saw that Messiah's trademark/signature expression, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you*" introduced us to Himself as the "stairway/bridge between heaven and earth," the only way to the kingdom of God, for He says in **John 14:6** "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." He it is that gives humanity the "*right of way*" to the kingdom of God, having bought us back from the slave master, yea from slavery. But having given humanity the "right of way" does not mean that all will accept it, furthermore use it. He therefore goes the next step, as He is wont to, and teaches us how to use/walk the stairway/bridge, for no one knows how to walk except he/she is taught.

In John 1, Messiah introduced us to Himself as the stairway/bridge between heaven and earth with His trademark/signature expression. In John 3, with the visit of Nicodemus, He goes into the mechanics of

getting into the kingdom of God, which is walking across the stairway/bridge. In reality He teaches us how to personally access the salvation/freedom which He at an infinite cost provided for all humanity. He not only made us legally free without our consent, i.e. free from the condemnation of the Law, but He begs us, beseeches us to give Him the opportunity to personally give it to us. He says in **Rev. 3:20** "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Consider this illustration, a school requires a particular type of fabric and colour uniform for all of its students. Only one individual in that country has the material required to make the uniforms, he is a rich, kind hearted mega-billionaire philanthropist. He gives the school the material at no cost to it. After freely giving the material, the philanthropist 'turns around' and pays to make five full uniforms for every individual student who indicates to him that he/she wants him to make the uniforms for them. What would you think of that philanthropist, and how do you think those students will, or rather, should think of, and relate to such a person? With gratitude, thankfulness, respect, etc. wouldn't you agree? Impressive as this analogy is with its limitations, the real Philanthropist, Messiah, has freely given all humanity the material, His righteousness/love/life, and then 'turns around' and offers to make a garment to fit each individual human being. Wow! He makes only one garment per individual, because, unlike the uniforms provided to the school which students outgrow, and which wear out, the garment which Messiah makes for whosoever indicates their need can never be outgrown or worn out. Hallelujah, what a wonderful saviour! In the words of one of our camp theme song, "Tell me what more what more what more can Jesus do?" So what is your response to Him? As **Isaiah 61:10** says, "***I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.***"

Going back to our substantive point, to be able to see, or walk, or talk, or do anything for that matter, we must first be born, that is a given. But interestingly when it comes to walking the stairway/bridge between earth and heaven many, oh so many want to walk it while unborn. What an absurdity, yet how many try. But Messiah tells us in John 3:3 with His trademark/signature expression, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and again in vs. 5, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Note Messiah says, except you are born again you cannot see, or further more enter/walk in the kingdom of God. Obviously if one cannot see a path he/she cannot enter into it. In order to see like all activities of life one has to be born, and in this instance be born again. But what does it mean to be born again? Often we hear the phrase, ‘the obvious should not be asked’, but often times that which seems be obvious is not so obvious. The experience of Nicodemus should be a lesson to us of this. Notice in the conversation between Messiah and Nicodemus that the obvious was not so obvious. Messiah appeared surprise when Nicodemus asked if being born again meant going back into his mother’s womb. As a teacher in Israel, one would think it was obvious that he knew what it meant to be “born again,” he proved that the obvious is not always so obvious. To quote a well-known statement from E.G. White, “The new birth is a rare experience in this age of the world. *This is the reason why there are so many perplexities in the churches.* Many, so many, who assume the name of Christ are unsanctified and unholy. *They have been baptized, but they were buried alive. Self did not die, and therefore they did not rise to newness of life in Christ* (Manuscript 148, 1897) Vol. 7A p. 1075, commenting on Romans 6:1-4. Self did not die. So when we speak of the “new birth” or being “born again” we are speaking of the death of “self”, or the death of the “old man” as we also know it. Note she uses the word experience relative to the new birth. Do you know this rare experience, or are you like Nicodemus?

We shall take nothing for granted, therefore we shall explore what it really means to be born again, and hence if all or any of us is born again. Note I say is born again, and not was born again, as I believe the new birth experience or the born again experience is a present continuous experience. No one cannot look on a person and tell if he/she is born again, nor should we try to do that, as that is not our work. Taking the definition of the new birth from Messiah Himself in John 3:5, we have the new birth then is being the “birth of the Spirit”, i.e. a completely different attitude/mind-set than we were born with. And what was the attitude/mind-set we were born with? One of complete selfishness in which we want the best for us and ours, and the rest, if left, others can have. But the new birth is the opposite of this, it is one in which the selfish attitude which once ruled no longer rules or dominates your spirit/attitude, but rather according to the Apostle Paul in **Philippians 2:1-3 (NLT)**, “Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship

together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? ²Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. ³*Don’t be selfish;* don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. ⁵*You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.* ⁶Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷Instead, he gave up his divine privileges:”

What a thought, give up His divine privileges, and what for? For rebels who did not care, this is the essence of the new birth, the birth of the Spirit, to be born again, preferring other better than one’s self, even/ especially our enemies. This is the new birth, and the highest expression of it, the agape love of God ruling and controlling our spirits/attitudes. **Vol. 7A p. 951** “*A mere profession of godliness is worthless. It is he that abideth in Christ that is a Christian.... Unless the mind of God becomes the mind of men, every effort to purify himself will be useless. ... Unless the truth is planted in the heart, it cannot control the life.* Cleansing the outside of the cup will never make the vessel pure within. A nominal acceptance of truth is good as far as it goes, and the ability to give a reason for our faith is a good accomplishment, *but if the truth does not go deeper than this, the soul will never be saved. The heart must be purified from all moral defilement* (Letter 13, 1893).

Speaking of being genuine children of God John the Baptist in **Luke 3:8, 9 (NLT)** says it this way, “*Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones.* ⁹Even now the axe of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.” It is instructive to note that persons who were baptized with the baptism of John needed further instructions about Messiah, yet such persons were power houses for God. Consider Apollos, **Acts 18:24-26 (NLT)**, “Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures well, had arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt. ²⁵He had been taught the way of the Lord, and *he taught others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit and with accuracy. However, he knew only about John’s baptism.* ²⁶When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately.” Is it not amazing that a man who knew only the baptism

of John and had to be taught more accurately could be such a power house teaching in the name of Messiah? Would we want to have him baptized and then proven to make sure he was ready for “our ministry?” In **Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 300 (1885)** a well-known quote says, “Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning. There will be those among us who will always want to control the work of God, to dictate even what movements shall be made when the work goes forward under the direction of the angel who joins the third angel in the message to be given to the world. God will use ways and means by which it will be seen that He is taking the reins in His own hands. The workers will be surprised by the simple means that He will use to bring about and perfect His work of righteousness.” O that we will permit Him to do what He wants to do to finish His work.

The baptism of John was called the baptism of repentance and hence inferior to that of Messiah’s, yet it was able accomplish so much in those who received it. Today we are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, especially since 1888 when, “The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world ***the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.*** It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” **Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 91.2**

We believe and teach that this message of “righteousness by faith” has entwined in it the message of the wonderful character of God our heavenly Father, and correctly so. “The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth. ... He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress

upon men the paternal love of the Father, who “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. *He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them despitefully. In this he was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth.* Those who accepted his teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul. **Christian Education p. 74**

Because this message is more potent than the message of repentance which John preached, it will produce more glorious results in the lives of the people who truly accept it. Love will be the hallmark of such persons, and it will bring all who accept it to the stage of Christian growth called “the ear” in Mark 4:26-29 which will be characterised by “prayer, repentance, confession, ... abandonment of sin ... honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, ... love [ing] not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them despitefully.” This is the character of God message which is “... the last message of mercy to be given to the world, [is] a **revelation** of His character of love.” COL 415

Closing thoughts

1 John 3:14, 16-17 (NLT) “If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. ... **16** We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. **17** If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—*how can God’s love be in that person?*”

“He who would become a child of God must receive the truth that **repentance and forgiveness are to be obtained through nothing less than the atonement of Christ.** Assured of this the sinner must put forth an effort in harmony with the work done for him, and with unwearied entreaty he must supplicate the throne of grace, that the renovating power of God may come into his soul. Christ pardons none but the penitent, but whom He pardons He first makes penitent. **The provision made is complete, and the eternal righteousness of Christ is placed to the account of every believing soul.** The costly, spotless robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has been provided for the repenting, believing sinner, and he may say: “I will greatly rejoice in

the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10). 1SM 394

”No human mind should seek to draw the line between the colored and white people. Let circumstances indicate what shall be done, for the Lord has His hand on the lever of circumstances. As the truth is brought to bear upon the minds of both colored and white people, as souls are thoroughly converted, they will become new men and women in Christ Jesus. Christ says, “A new heart also will I give you,” And that new heart bears the divine image. Those who are converted among the white people will experience a change in their sentiments. The prejudice which they have inherited and cultivated toward the colored race will die away. They will realize that there is no respect of persons with God. Those who are converted among the colored race will be cleansed from sin, will wear the white robe of Christ’s righteousness, which has been woven in the loom of heaven. Both white and colored people must enter into the path of obedience through the same way.

The test will come, not as regards the outward complexion, but as regards the condition of the heart. Both the white and the colored people have the same Redeemer, who has paid the ransom money with His own life for every member of the human family.” RH April 2, 1895, par. 8. What attractions and loveliness are our Redeemer’s, oh praise the Lord.

*Yours in the true Gospel of the Messiah
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