

Restored Truth Bible Study #11 - Born Again

July 13, 2013

In Restored Truth Bible Study #10, it was explained how becoming part of God's Kingdom parallels the process of human birth. Christ explains this process to the Pharisee teacher Nicodemus who came at night to talk with Christ. In John 3:3 Christ told Nicodemus: *Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God...*

One must be born again to be in God's Kingdom. In Restored Truth Bible Study #10 it was explained that the word 'born', 'gennaō' (Strong's #1080), means to procreate, properly of the father; but by extension it can also refer to the mother. Figuratively, this word means to regenerate. Based on context, the Bible uses this word as begotten, or born. The word 'again', which was not focused on in Bible Study #10, is the word 'anothen', (Strong's #509). This word means from above, by analogy from the first. It can also mean anew. What Christ is saying in John 3:3 is that one must literally be born from above in order to see the kingdom of God. A person not born from above cannot see God's Kingdom.

The process of human birth, as covered in the Restored Truth Bible Study #10, begins when the sperm of the father impregnates the ovum of the mother. At that point, or moment, the father has begotten the child. This is very important to understand, because this same process of begetting applies in a person being born again.

Nicodemus comes back to Christ in John 3:4 because he is a bit puzzled by Christ's comments. John 3:4 *How can a man be born when he is old?...[How can a human being repeat the human birthing process when he is old?] Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?...[Nicodemus couldn't comprehend what Christ was saying] (vs 5) Jesus answered and said most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* These are the two requirements for being spiritually begotten, water and spirit.

In Acts 2:38 here it explains what it means to be born of water and Spirit. *Then Peter said to them...[In response to his sermon on the Feast of Pentecost:] Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission...[forgiveness] of sins...[baptism applies to the water] and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* One shall receive the gift of God's Spirit. This process of being born again begins with repentance of sin, followed by baptism, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

In John 3:6 Christ makes a clear distinction between the human and spiritual birth process, saying: *That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of spirit is spirit.* If one is born of flesh, the individual is flesh. When one is born of spirit, the individual is spirit.

In 1 Cor. 15:50 Paul makes the same point: *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot...[CANNOT] inherit the kingdom of God...[Which is exactly what Christ said in John 3 to Nicodemus] nor does corruption inherit incorruption.* Corruption refers to the human physical life the corruption and incorruption to spirit life. God's Kingdom is not of this world, contrary to the teaching that God's Kingdom is on the earth now when people accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and become part of God's Kingdom. Those who are flesh and blood cannot be part of God's Kingdom. God's Word is explicitly clear on this truth. Since this world is populated by flesh and blood human beings, therefore it cannot be God's Kingdom.

In John 3:7 Christ said: *Do not marvel...[Nicodemus] that I said to you, you must be born again.* Or born from above. This should not be a surprised when it is understood Christ is talking about the spiritual process of birth, which mirrors that of human birth?

Notice what Elohim, God and the Word, said what their intent was in Gen. 1:26 when mankind was created. *And God said, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.* Human beings are created in the image of God. To know what God looks like involves only looking at another human being. God has a head; a body; two arms; ten fingers; two legs; two feet; ten toes. God and Jesus Christ have the same body parts as human beings, with the exception that they are spirit and human beings are flesh. Human beings are physical representations of the God family. This is how mankind has its connection with God.

Gen. 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.* So, men and women are created in the image of God. Obviously, there are differences between men and women, strong differences. Yet both are created in the image of God.

In Gen. 2:18 deals with the role of women as God created them. *And the Eternal God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him. (vs 21) And the Eternal God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. (vs 22) Then the rib which the Eternal God had taken from the man, he made into a woman, and brought her to the man...[When Adam saw this beautiful part of God's creation he said:]*

(vs 23) *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. (vs 24) Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

Right here the role of a woman is defined as it applies to the relationship of marriage. A woman is to be the helper of the man. She is not to be a slave, or servant, but to be a helper. God did not create the woman to be in the leadership role of the family. The man is to lead. When the woman assumes the leadership role in a family, it allows the man to abdicate the leadership role God created him for. When men abdicate their leadership roles, bad things happen within family and society.

Notice what it says in Gen. 4:1 about the very first human being born on this earth, the son of Adam and Eve called Cain: *Now Adam knew his wife...[sexual relations] and she conceived...[Or Adam begot within her] and bore Cain...[Notice what she said:] I have acquired a man from the Eternal.* This proves exactly what Christ said in John 3 - that which is born of flesh is flesh.

It should not be surprising that in God's plan of salvation for mankind spiritual birth would mirror human birth. God designed it this way to teach how people become part of His family. Notice how this physical-to-spiritual way of teaching works.

In 1 Cor. 15:44, Paul writes: *There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (vs 45) And so it is written, the first man became a living being, the last Adam [Jesus Christ] became a life-giving spirit. (vs 46) However, the spiritual is not first; but the natural; and afterward the spiritual...*

Right here in (vs 46) is illustrated the principle of duality. God uses this principle by working through something physical to teach about something spiritual, which will occur at a later time. (vs 46) *The spiritual is not first, but the natural; and afterward the spiritual...*[Human beings have to first live a physical human life and prove themselves faithful in God's Truth. At God's pre-determined time, then these same people become spiritual, able to live forever] (vs 47) *The first man was of the earth, made of dust: the second man is the Lord from heaven. (vs 48) As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust...*[Paul makes the same point Christ made in John 3, that which is born of flesh is flesh] *and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are heavenly...*[cross-reference verse 48 with John 3:6] (vs 49) *And as we have born the image of the man of dust...[what human beings currently are now] we shall also...[in the future] bear the image of the heavenly man.*

The first half of this verse speaks to our present human lives; but the second half of the verse speaks to the future. Remember, the word 'born', 'gennao', is a reference to begetting by the father, or delivery by the mother.

In Matt. 1:16 we see this same word used in two different contexts. Speaking of Christ's human father of Joseph, it says: *And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary...[Notice Joseph's father was the source of his life] Of whom [or from whom] was born Jesus, who is called Christ.* The words begot and born in this verse there are the same Greek word 'gennao'. The first usage refers to the father begetting a child. The second usage describes the child being delivered from its mother's womb. To understand 'gennao' correctly, it must be understood within the context it is used. This will become more apparent throughout this Bible Study.

It is important to emphasize when Christ was talking to Nicodemus, He was talking about the actual spiritual birth of a person, not when a person is spiritually begotten. With an understanding of the usage of "born," it's time to examine the meaning of the word 'again'. It is the Greek word 'anothen', Strong's #509, meaning from above, or from the first, or anew.

Notice how this word is used in connection to the veil in the Temple that was ripped at the moment Christ died on the stake.

Matt. 27:51: *Then behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.* The word top is 'anothen'. It shows the connection with the direction of top or being on high.

With an understanding about this important detail of direction, James 1:17 tells where God the Father resides. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above...['anothen'] and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.* James specifically states these good gifts, which include being begotten in His family; comes from above. From God the Father, who resides in heaven above.

Jesus Christ comes from the same above place. John the Baptist, speaking about Christ says in John 3:31: *He who comes from above...['anothen'] is above all: he who is of the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth: he who comes from heaven is above all.* Clearly John is making the same point as Christ and Paul that one born of flesh is flesh and one born of spirit is spirit.

Of course, we understand Christ gave up His eternal life to become a flesh and blood human being, to live a perfect life and die as a perfect sacrifice.

Christ also says where He came from in John 8:42: *Jesus said to them, if God were your Father, you would love me: for I proceed forth and came from God, nor have I come of myself, but he sent me.* It is important to understand the elements needed to be born again come from God the Father. Notice how Christ set the example of baptism, water and spirit.

Remember Christ didn't have to repent of anything. He was perfect; but He was baptized, and He did receive the Holy Spirit, which we understand Christ had without measure. Matt. 3:13 *Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. (vs 14) John tried to prevent him saying, I need to be baptized by you; and are you coming to me? (vs 15) But Jesus answered and said to him permit it to be so now: for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he allowed him. (vs 16) When he had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water: and behold, the heavens were open to him, and he saw the Spirit of God, descending like a dove and alighting upon him. (vs 17) And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*

When a person repents and is baptized, and receives the Holy Spirit, the Spirit received is from God the Father. In the previous Bible Study Christ was very specific in explaining 'born again,' and how it is God the Father who begets those He calls with His Spirit, just like a human father begets the human child with his sperm. Both situations represent the beginning of life, one human life, the other spiritual life. So as was pointed out in Restored Truth Bible Study #10, we are merely begotten now, later to be born again.

It is important to understand the activities of begotten members of God's family. What are the activities of the begotten? This understanding provides a full picture of what it means to be born again.

2 Cor. 13:5 shows what the begotten Christian needs to do after being baptized and receiving God's Holy Spirit. Paul writes: *Examine yourselves, as to whether you are in the faith...*[The faith is the truth of God.] *Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you?...*[Are Corinthians aware that Jesus Christ is in you through God's Holy Spirit?] *unless indeed you are disqualified...*[reprobates, King James] (vs 6) *But I trust that you will know that you are not disqualified.*

In the Greek the word test means, to endeavor, to scrutinize, to entice, or to discipline. How would one know their spiritual condition unless it is being monitored through continuous prayer, study, review and learning? It requires checking things out, not accepting things just because the minister says it is so.

Are you maintaining the faith within yourself? A lot of people, in God's Church, failed to maintain the faith following the death of Mr. Armstrong. The result of this is seen in Revelation 3 in Christ's description of the final era of God's Church before His return. Notice this final era is not aware of their spiritual condition. But Christ is very aware of it and says these Church members are "*wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.*" (Rev 3:17) Yet they don't understand. Why? Because no spiritual examination is taking place. Are you maintaining the faith within yourself?

In addition to examination, a second question must be asked: are you in a place that can help you maintain the faith and grow in it? God put His Church on this earth for a reason. It functions like the human mother. God intends the Church to protect, feed, and nourish those His begotten children. Unfortunately, the Church can be a very dangerous place for begotten Christians because false ministers and false teachings creep in which threaten the spiritual welfare of God's flock.

It is important to understand that maintaining the faith is an ongoing daily process. Every day one must do a little bit to grow spiritually. One cannot become a born again Christian in one day. It is a daily process, a little bit here, a little bit tomorrow, and a little bit after that. Over the course of time spiritual growth develops.

In 2 Cor. 11:2 Paul expresses a big concern he had for God's Church in Corinth. This is the right attitude every minister of God should have toward the brethren. *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy: for I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (vs 3) But I fear lest somehow as the serpent...[Satan] deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (vs 4) For if he who comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it.*

Unless the process of daily examination is occurring, it is easy to begin putting up with something that is false. This occurs because teachings are not checked out, which do appeal to carnal nature. The word 'deceived' in the New King James, or 'beguiled' in the King James, means to 'seduce wholly'. In other

words, a person is not just partially seduced, but completely or totally seduced. This cannot happen to you, if you are examining daily whether or not you're in the faith.

In Ps. 26:2 notice what David says. This is also must be included in the examination process: *Examine me, O Eternal, and prove me...[or test me] try my mind and my heart.*

God's people go through various experiences in life. These experiences are important to the examination process and show God who is going to stick with His Truth and who is not. David's use of the word test is a reference to metals, or investigation. In working with metals, the goal is to extract the purest form. How is this done? Through the use of intense heat. This is why some of the experiences God's people go through in life are very tough, very difficult and very trying. These experiences stretch, push, cause pain, which are all part of the process of examining and proving. Once a trial or test has been completed, it should make the person spiritually stronger and more knowledgeable in God's Truth. Remember, the way of truth, God's way, is on the straight and narrow path, not the broad way.

In Ps. 139:23 David again explains the purpose for examination, what the outcome should be: *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me...[or test me] and know my anxieties... [thoughts].*

This verse deals with what is going between a person's ears, the mind. Do you know what is going between yours? Are your thoughts centered on God's law, or on thoughts of carnal nature? Do you know? Do you recognize when a wrong thought crosses your mind? Are you aware when you are entertaining carnal or fleshly thoughts, ideas, or attitudes in your mind? Or are you just blissfully going along?

(vs 24) *See if there is any wicked way in me...[David wants to know] and lead me in the way everlasting.* As physical representations of God, living life on this earth, God's people must learn to forsake the ways of this world. This is what produces good spiritual growth leading to a good spiritual birth. God expects us to grow in His Ways.

It is not just enough to repent and be baptized. One must move forward from that point on.

2 Pet. 3:17 *You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.*

It is very possible for a person to fall away from God's Truth. But not if one is examining their spiritual life. Another important point is that Satan cannot deceive and lead someone away who is examining their lives on a daily basis. Sometimes Satan is given too much credit for things he cannot do.

God's people have the responsibility for growing and making the changes that need to be made in life. Satan will try to impede the process; but will be unsuccessful when one steps up to the plate and takes responsibility for one's own actions.

2 Pet. 3:18 *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, both now and forever. Amen.* The word 'grow' means 'to enlarge'. God's people should not be in the same spiritual place they were at baptism. There should be spiritual growth; maturity; and a deeper understanding of God's Word. Things that used to be a bother in life should no longer encumber God's people because they are overcoming sin and developing God's character. God expects His people to grow.

In regard to Satan, a more offensive minded approach must be taken toward him. Too often God's people are on defense. While this a necessary part of spiritual development, to be engaged means to go on the offense. How does one go on offense against Satan?

James 4:7 *Therefore submit to God...* What does this mean? It means to do what God says to do. Personal opinion is not important when God says to do something different. One must get over the personal hump, as it were, in order to make the type of spiritual growth needed to be born again.

As mentioned earlier in this Bible Study, Satan is given too much credit. When people do what God says to do, Satan has no choice but to leave. James 4:7 *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

This is what the Bible says. Stop blaming Satan for your troubles. Ask yourself: am I doing what God wants me to do? If so, Satan has no choice but to leave you alone. If not, repent and change your ways. Go in a different direction and Satan will go in a different direction.

James 4:8 *Draw near to God...* [How is this done? Through daily prayer, bible study, fasting, and thinking about God's way of life] *and he will draw near to you...* [God will not help those disobeying

him] *Cleanse your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts you double-minded...*

Double mindedness is thinking about two different things at the same time. James is speaking to thinking about God's way of life and man's carnal way of life. This needs to be repented of. God's people must be single-minded, focused on God's truth and what He says to do.

(vs 9) *Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to gloom.*

(vs 10) *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

Rom. 12:21 *Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.* How does one overcome evil with good? By doing what God says to do. His Way is the good way; it is right; it is true. It's not necessarily the easy way, but it is the only way that works. The word 'overcome' means to subdue, conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory.

In Matt. 24:13 Christ gets very specific with His disciples. He has just told them about some very difficult things they are going to experience later in their lives. *But he who endures to the end...* [He who bears up under the pressure] *shall be saved.* A person must go through the full process of begetting before one can be born into the God family. It is exactly what has to happen.

Now look back at born again, what must a begotten member of the God family do to be fully born into God's family? In Eph. 5:8 *For you were once darkness...* [The spiritual condition of people before God's calling] *but now you are light in the Lord: walk as children of light...*

(vs 9) *For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.* (vs 10) *Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord...* [This goes back to examining whether or not one is in the faith. There is a lot to know about God, which is why God's people must continue learning and growing] (vs 11) *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose [or reprove] them...* God's people cannot tolerate sin. (vs 12) *For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret...*

Paul is referring to knowledge of someone's sins and being afraid to speak out against it; but being willing to discuss these sins privately with someone else. Paul says not to do that. (vs 13) *but all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light: for whatever makes manifest is light...* [God's truth exposes what is wrong, and highlights what is right. The wicked like to operate in darkness because it

gives them cover. Darkness conceals their wicked deeds] (vs 14) *Therefore he says, awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.* This is the point at which a person, who follows Paul's instruction, will be born again. Paul's quotation of Isaiah confirms the context of being born again.

Isa. 26:19 *Your dead shall live, together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust: for your dew is like the dew of the herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead...*

Isaiah is speaking of resurrection from the dead, specifically the first resurrection. (vs 20) *Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation [Days of Vengeance/great tribulation] is past.* (vs 21) *For, behold, the Lord comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.* Verse 21 speaks to events of the Day of the Lord.

Isa. 60:1 *Arise, shine: for the light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.* (vs 2) *For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people: but the Eternal will arise over you, and his glory will be seen upon you.*

When Christ returns the resurrection of the firstfruits will occur. This will be a very dark and gloomy time on the earth. It will not be a good time to be a physical human being. Isaiah is describing events surrounding the first resurrection.

This resurrection has been discussed in previous Bible Studies; but needs to be discussed in this Bible Study as it relates to being born again.

When God resurrects people, there is an order to it. 1 Cor. 15:22 provides that order. *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive...*[Or born-again] (vs 23) *But each in his own order: Christ, the first fruit...*[Christ the very first one to be resurrected] *afterwards those who are Christ's at his coming.* This ties in with Isaiah and those who will be resurrected from the dead at His 2nd Coming. These people will be born again at the second coming of Jesus Christ. How this awesome event takes place is described in 1 Thessalonians.

1 Thes. 4:16 *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God...*[This is the seventh trumpet] *and the dead in Christ will rise first...*[Will

be born again] (vs 17) *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and thus we shall always be with the Lord...*

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 those who are alive at Christ's return will be changed from mortal to immortal, in the moment, or in the twinkling of an eye. That's when this group of people will be born again. Those who are alive at this period of time will have lived under God's protection through the terrifying Days of Vengeance. When the dead are raised at the seventh trumpet, they, along with those who are alive will rise together in the air to meet Christ. At this point these people are born again.

(vs 18) *Therefore comfort one another with these words.* This information should be very encouraging to those who understand the dead in Christ will live again. The resurrection is how the dead in Christ will be born again into the family of God.

Rev. 20:6 *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection: over such the second death has no power. They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him 1000 years.* This applies to those in the Kingdom of God, who are spirit beings and have eternal life. Once born again, death no longer as claim on a person.

In 1 John 3:9 notice what else being born again means: *Whoever has been born of God does not sin: for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.* When a person is born again, that person will no longer commit sin. This means the person born again is perfect.

Take note of what is said about those who will be part of the first resurrection in Rev. 14:1. There is a specific number who will be in the first resurrection. *Then I looked and, behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000, having his Father's name written on their foreheads...*

What is significant about "Having his Father's name"? Remember, it is the Father who begot this group of 144,000. Once they repented and were baptized, had hands laid upon them, and received the Holy Spirit, these people grew in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ all the way to the end of their physical lives. Upon death they laid in their graves until being resurrected or born again. These are God the Father's children.

(vs 4) *For these are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to*

God and to the Lamb...[These firstfruits are who Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 15 who are Christ's at His coming. Here they are in Rev. 14:4] (vs 5) *And in their mouth was found no deceit: for they are without fault before the throne of God.* One cannot be without fault unless born again. When one is born again, that person is perfect.

There have been billions of people born over the course of human history, but only 144,000 will make up the number of those in first resurrection. What about the billions of others who are dead and in their graves?

All these others are referred to as "the dead" by John in Rev. 20. Remember, there is an order to people being resurrected. Rev. 20:11 *Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away...* [This is speaking of God the Father] *and there was no place found for them...* [Them is "the dead"] (vs 12) *And I saw all the dead...* [The same dead John refers to in Rev. 20:5] *small and great, standing before God; and the books were opened...* [The books refer to the Bible] *and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged according to their works by the things which were written in the books.*

It is God's Word that spells out right and wrong. It is God's Word that spells out the penalty for sin. It is God's Word that spells out how that penalty can be dealt with. It is God's Word that shows how a person can be begotten and born again.

Here is an incredible truth; the vast majority of human beings who have lived and died on this earth, never received God's calling. They were never part of God's old testament or new testament Church. The vast majority never heard the Word of God before, or the name Jesus Christ. But in God's plan they are going to hear and learn His Word and have their opportunity to be begotten, which in turn will lead to them being born again. The process of being born again will continue until sin and death no longer exist.

I Cor. 15:54 *So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (vs 55) O death, where is your sting, O Hades, where is your victory? (vs 56) The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. (vs 57) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (vs 58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

There is going to come a time when there will be no more sin. When there is no more sin, there's no more death; and when there's no more death everybody lives forever. Everybody will live perfectly by the law of God. No death equals no sin. It is important to contemplate and consider what a wonderful time this is going to be.

Now understand what being born again is not. These studies use the sourcebook for traditional Christianity called the catechism of the Catholic Church, to compare its teachings with God's Word about these restored truths, to see if it matches.

Section 1003 says:

United with Christ by baptism, believers already truly participate in the heavenly life of the risen Christ; but this life remains hidden with Christ in God. The father has already raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Nourished with his body in the Eucharist, we already belong to the body of Christ. When we rise on the last day, we also will appear with him in glory.

Section 1021 says:

Death puts an end to human life as the time opens to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ. The New Testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in his second coming; but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death, in accordance with his works in faith. The parable of the poor man Lazarus, and the words of Christ on the cross to the good thief ... (Is there such a thing as a good thief?) ... as well as other New Testament texts speak of the final destiny of the soul, a destiny which can be different for some than for others.

Section 1022:

Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ, either entrance into the blessedness of heaven, through a purification, or immediate and everlasting damnation.

When one reads the catechism of the Catholic Church, it provides the perspective that people can be born again two ways, after baptism, and after death. This is not what God's Word says.

God's people can never rest. Paul expressed on many occasions his concerns about the brethren being deceived. Remember, Satan is always pushing to destroy God's Truth and God's people. Once he is repelled on one front, he has to be repelled on another front. That is the way it is with Satan.

This why God's people have to be more tenacious about what they do, what they believe, and where they are going than Satan the devil is. Satan's never-ending attempts to promote his false teachings within God's Church cannot be disguised forever. Satan always has to reveal his hand and when he does it is clear to those who know God's Word and live by it.

Notice how he revealed his hand in the WCG after Mr. Armstrong's death when it came to the topic of being born again. From his Personal in the Worldwide News of January 28, 1991, Mr. Tkach says the following:

Mr. Armstrong's analogy of human gestation is a good analogy, but we must not confuse it with the biblical analogy, of being born again which is referring to Christian conversion.

From the same Personal, Mr. Tkach makes this comment:

Mr. Armstrong had come to see correctly, that the popular born again concept led many people to misunderstand true Christian conversion as laid out in the scripture. Mr. Armstrong's purpose was to point out the difference between true conversion and false conversion.

In 1 John 3:9, it specifically states that a person born again cannot sin. Born again has nothing to do with conversion.

From an article entitled *The Breathtaking Miracle of Being Born from Above* by Bernard Schnippert, in the Worldwide News of February 3, 1992, Mr. Schnippert writes the following about 1 John 3:9:

Even before the death of Mr. Armstrong, the Church understood that 1 John 3:9 is not really speaking about an impossibility to sin, but of the need of the Christian not to abide in sin. This means that the expression born again in 1 John 3:9 refers to this life. Of course, Nicodemus would marvel. He would marvel because it seemed bewildering that a supposed religious leader should be told that he didn't have a spiritual mind.

That is not what Christ was telling Nicodemus at all. Refer back to Bible Study #10 to see what the discussion between Christ and Nicodemus was really about.

Finally, from a sermon by Joseph Tkach, Jr. delivered in September of 1992, he said the following:

Let's move to the second biblical fact, and that is the New Testament does not use the analogy of conception. Hope that doesn't shock anyone, but the New Testament is void of that analogy. It does not use it.

Mr. Tkach said Mr. Armstrong was wrong in his teaching on born again. Bernard Schnippert said that, even before Mr. Armstrong's death, 1 John 3:9 did not refer to being born again in the future. It was something that occurred in this physical life. Joseph Tkach, Jr said that the conception analogy is not in use within the New Testament.

From his sermon delivered on December 17, 1983, entitled *The Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era* Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong dispels these falsehoods. He said the following, which is also referenced in the Restored Truth Bible Study #10. To ensure the full picture of what Mr. Armstrong thought, what he taught, and what he believed, it will be helpful to review it again.

And the fact that we're begotten now, you're not born yet, only begotten; that we will become born at the time of the second coming of Christ when this mortal puts on immortality when we won't be human any longer. We'll be divine. The knowledge that he that is born of flesh is flesh, mortal (and that's what we are) that is that when you are born of Spirit, you will be spirit.

If Mr. Armstrong were alive at the time Joe Tkach, Sr., Bernard Schnippert, Joe Tkach, Jr were deceiving God's people, he would have told them in no uncertain terms, they were not yet born again now. Then he would have disfellowshipped in order to protect God's truth and God's people.

Remember: we are begotten now. We will be born again later.