

THE NEW BIRTH

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Chapter 10 – Born of Water and the Spirit

In John 3:5-7, Jesus told Nicodemus: “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is *born of water and the Spirit*. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the *Spirit gives birth to spirit*. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’”

As mentioned, Jesus' teaching about the New Birth was that God's Divine Love, withdrawn from mankind with the fall of the first parents, had been re-bestowed by the Father in His goodness and mercy. Jesus, his soul filled with the Father's Love, was the visible proof of its bestowal.

What does “water” refer to or represent in this case? Other scriptures give us clues.

Water of Eternal Life

In another Bible account, Jesus spoke to a Samaritan woman at a well about “living water” he had to give and the type of worship the Father desires.

John 4:10-15; 20-24 – Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and *he would have given you living water*.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as

did also his sons and his flocks and herds?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, *the water I give him will become in him a spring of water I welling up to eternal life.*” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” ... “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ... A time is coming and has now come when the *true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth*, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

The spiritual worship that the Father seeks comes into effect once a person starts asking for the gift of the Holy Spirit/Divine Love – symbolized by living water welling up to eternal life. Such worship includes spending time in prayer (verbal, silent and/or meditation) fellowshiping with God, as well as spiritual reading. At these times spent with the Father, we can experience not only peace and love, but may find answers to situations or problems deposited into our souls as we sit in silence after praying.

Another clue about the life-giving spiritual water can be found in the book of Titus.

Born of Water and the Spirit

Titus 3:3-7 – At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared [the time of re-bestowal of the Divine Love], he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He *saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit*, whom he poured out on us generously through [the teachings of] Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been *justified by his grace*, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

So again, the Holy Spirit, imparting the Divine Love, is symbolized by “living water” – the agent of washing, renewal, and eventually eternal life in the Celestial Kingdom.

Water of Divine Truth

Further in the gospel of John, we learn that *Jesus’ teachings are spirit and life*. Other passages show them to have, like water, a cleansing and purifying effect.

John 6:63 – The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The *words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life*.

Ephesians 5:26 – ... to make [the church] holy, cleansing her by the *washing with water through the word*.

John 15:3 – You are already *clean because of the word I [Jesus] have spoken to you.*

John 17:17 – *Sanctify them [make them holy, set apart] by the truth; your word is truth.*

Reborn through God's Word of Truth

Jesus' God-given message that the Divine Love was again available to humanity was the life-giving truth that if acted on, would indeed lead to eternal life. Imparted through the Holy Spirit into one's soul, the Divine Love would be a cleansing and purifying agent, eradicating sin and error. It would also be transforming the soul from a divine image into divine substance, giving it immortality. This process is what it means to be born again – to experience the New Birth. Several Bible passages confirm this truth, for example:

1 Peter 1:22-23 – Now that you have *purified yourselves by obeying the truth* so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been *born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

James 1:18 – He chose to *give us birth through the word of truth*, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

John 1:12-13 – Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name [as the Saviour bringing life-giving teachings], he gave the *right to become children of God* – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, *but born of God*.

So to sum up, the water is not merely a symbol of purification, but the "living waters" of God's own essence, His Divine Love, which fills the soul and enables it to live. The Holy Spirit does not come to dwell in a human soul but, as the instrument of God, conveys the Father's Love into the soul of the earnest seeker. God's Word, brought to humanity by Jesus, about the Divine Love again becoming available, is spirit and the key to the New Birth. This transformation of the human soul into the Divine Soul and the consequent purification from sin qualifies the soul to live throughout all eternity with God in His Celestial Mansions. This is the Love which Jesus manifested in his soul and with which his apostles were to love one another.

Jesus was the first human born from above – born of the Holy Spirit in that it is the agent through which the Father's Love was poured out in abundance into his soul. And he told Nicodemus that he, as well as all who would obey his life-giving spirit teachings, could be reborn through the Spirit and become at-one with the Father.