

Born from Above

Sabbath, October 29, 2011

Through July 7, 2015

by

Roeben & Matsayah Shalom

Opening Thought:

What does it mean to be born? According to Webster's 1828 edition, "1. *To be born, is to be produced or brought into life.*" When we were born into this material world we were brought into natural life by our physical parents. At that moment we were introduced into a world in which self is the primary objective; we instantly set about learning how to minister to the needs and wants of the body. We pursued the very best we could find for ourselves...until one day we came to the realization that selfishness creates an empty world. A sad and empty world. One day we began longing for something better; far better. Is it possible to be born again, born of the Spirit? Is it possible in the present to be brought into spiritual life?

If one could be liberated from impatience, anger, jealousy, envy, lust, foolishness, fear, double-mindedness, hypocrisy, pride, depression and indecision, would he? If there were a power far beyond our own feeble efforts to do what we know is right, and it was available to us right here and now, would we not avail ourselves of it? Would we not leap toward it? While a mild degree of these traits reveals a weakness of character, when they come to full maturity wherein anger develops into violence and lust into adultery, we may know that such a one has gone from a simple sinner into the dark realm of demonic control. The Almighty promises a way of escape from every besetting sin. The Scriptures describe two opposing kingdoms: a kingdom of darkness and a kingdom of light; and there is a deep chasm between them. There is only one bridge to span that chasm and it is the cross of Yahshua; it is our solitary way of escape. The question is, will we recognize that way of escape, and take it?

Have you ever wondered if all the promises of the gospel are not just make-believe? Freedom from sin is what the gospel promises but is that what we see in the lives of believers? Many do not even want to be free from the power of sin. They toy with sin: pornography, but not adultery. They comfort themselves that they're better than the outright adulterer. They may want the blessings of heaven but not if it is going to cost them something. Some want the victorious life but are not sure if such a thing is even possible.

If we could reverse this contradiction between the victorious gospel and the defeated life, would we not run toward it? The Hebrew Messiah said all who practice the things listed above will not make it into His kingdom of Light; for those are the ways of darkness. He said that no one can serve two masters: he'll love the one and hate the other. There is a man in the seventh chapter of Romans who desires to be victorious but never quite achieves his goal. Is the Romans Seven Man the normal experience of the believer: always doing exactly opposite of what he wants to and hardly ever doing what is right? Or is that a portrayal of the poor man caught between the two worlds? We read of the Messiah and marvel at such a powerful spiritual experience, and marvel even more that He invites us into that same experience: full and absolute victory over the fallen nature of man. A seeming impossibility?

We see thousands of people claiming to have been born again, and yet we can hardly discern them from anyone else in the world. The only time they talk a little differently is when they are around other believers. How pitiful the plight of the believer! We do not deny they do wonderful and benevolent things in the world, but when it comes to the conquest over sin, the record is too clear to misread: most are the victims rather than the victors. The irony of it is that nearly all who are in this defeated camp will tell you that they are not defeated at all; that their victory is totally in Jesus...while they lean back and eat another cluster of grapes.

Because of this obvious contradiction between the profession and the practice, others have deduced that because we're still in this corruptible human flesh (the carnal mind), it just isn't meant to be in this present human experience: the only way we can finally be free is to die and be resurrected as spirit beings. Only then will we be free to live the victorious life. But victory implies warfare; when the Messiah's kingdom finally comes the battle is over and done. So victory over sin won't be an issue then. And by this line of reasoning, neither is it such a momentous issue now since evidently it cannot be achieved anyway—not in this poor human experience. We know that victory signifies conquest over an enemy, and the prize in this war is eternal life. Our Captain told us to put on the armor of our warfare and fight alongside Him.

Regarding salvation, there are three divergent doctrines; three separate encampments as it were, or schools of thought. Those in Camp Number One believe that they are to do nothing but accept the conquest of their great Captain; that in fact, to *do* anything constitutes *unbelief*. Then there is Camp Number Two; their claim is that conquest cannot come in this life. In Camp Two, they know that everyone will be held personally accountable for his own actions; but they, like their comrades in Camp One, say that sin is just too big a foe to fight against in this weak flesh. Like the Romans Seven man, they acknowledge that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak; and sin is so powerful, always bringing us into captivity: an unconquerable foe.

Interspersed in these two encampments are others who deny that there is even an enemy at all; some deny that sin exists, others that Hasatan exists, and a few that even we exist. Maybe that is what Gideon faced when he had to reduce his army of 33,000 down to 3,000, and finally down to 300. They were going out against 300,000 of the enemy. *"If it were possible even the very elect will be deceived."* (Matthew 24:24).

We are duty bound to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. We may have been taught a certain thing that we have held fast to most all our lives, and then one day someone came along to show us "a better way," but was it really? Is it possible to jump from the frying pan into the fire? Just because we may have imbibed falsehood in our younger days, an extreme opposite error is not the solution to the problem. Arsenic is not the antidote to strychnine. Only truth is the antidote to error; and truth is not so difficult to find: it makes sense, and further, it is verifiable by the written Word. It is not for the lazy and the indolent however; it is only for the vigilant—all who value the prize of eternal life enough to put forth a little effort in its pursuit.

In this writing, we'll discuss more in detail the enigma of these two ideologies, but we'll not leave the honest student hanging in the balance: *for there is a third encampment*. Our chief aim however, is not merely to disseminate information or to win an argument, but rather that we may enter into *the experience* of the renewal of the soul. So let us prepare ourselves to embark on another wonderful journey through Scripture-land; let us open our eyes to behold wondrous things out of Yahweh's Torah and His Tehodah witness of the prophets and their fulfillment in Yahshua the Messiah. (Isaiah 8:20).

Because this subject is founded in the Hebrew Scriptures, we'll restore the original names and titles of Scripture. For the divine name of Yahweh used throughout this study, we'll use the Hebrew characters יהוה; we'll replace the Greek Jesus with the Hebrew *Yahshua*. And finally, we'll utilize the Hebrew *Elohyim* instead of the word God.

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The Invisible Wind

“*Nobody’s perfect; everybody sins...*” When enough people proclaim the seeming impossibility of living a righteous life here on earth, people will believe them. When a doctor gives a person with a terminal illness six months to live, he’ll believe him, and sure enough, he’ll die six months later. One man told his doctor six months wouldn’t be enough time to gather the money to pay his bill, so the doctor gave him a year. The Bible likens sin to a terminal disease. To say that everybody sins is comparable to saying that everybody is dying of a terminal illness and there has never been a well person on the earth: “*Nobody’s healthy; everybody is dying of a terminal illness.*” It would be ludicrous to make such a proclamation; there have been plenty of healthy people throughout history, as there are right now.

Is religion just a passive pastime, an interesting topic of discussion ranking slightly above that of politics? Doesn’t it say in Hebrews 12:14 that “*without holiness no one will see יהוה*?” If such be the case, then is righteousness, holiness really such an impossibility as we are told? And if not, how can we enter this mysterious realm of the righteous? One thing is for certain: we cannot be in the covenant of righteousness unless we have somehow entered into it. We cannot enter any other way than what our Master has said, and that is through the spiritual birth. Is it possible to be “born again,” born of the Spirit, in this present life? Because it is mentioned several times in the New Testament writings (once in John 1:13; five times in John 3; once in Galatians 4; once in James 1:18; once in 1st Peter 1:23; and nine times in 1st John: *that is 18 times altogether*), and the prototype is brought forth in the Tanakh (Old Testament), not only is it worthy of our consideration, but it is evident that a right understanding of this matter is vital to our salvation. Why did Yahshua ever make mention of it in the first place? Here is the text:

John 3:1-3 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Yahshua by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from Elohyim: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except Elohyim be with him. Yahshua replied, "I tell you for certain that you must be born from above before you can see Elohyim's kingdom!" (CEV).

John 3:31 He that comes from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth: he that comes from heaven is above all. (AKJ).

John 3:36 He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of Elohyim stays on him. (KJV).

The text above clearly states that if we do not believe the Son we shall not see life. In Messiah’s lucid statement to Nicodemus in the identical manner, He said that unless we’re born again, born of the Spirit, we’ll not see the kingdom of יהוה; we’ll not see life. From the outset the foundation is laid that at least two things are required of us here and now as prerequisites to entering life: to believe in the Messiah, and to be born of the Holy Spirit. We may understand that to believe in the Messiah is to receive Him as the Atonement for our soul and Master of our life; it is for the present and not something suspended for a future event.

John 1:12, 13 However, to all who received him, those believing in his name, he gave authority to become יהוה’s children, who were born, not merely in a genetic sense, nor from lust, nor from man’s desire, but from the will of Elohyim. (ISV).

This text couples the dual concept of receiving the Messiah and the spiritual birth. Bear in mind, even before the famous third chapter of John wherein we find the theme of the spiritual birth so focused upon, this passage verifies that *when* we receive the Messiah we *then* have the

divine authority to be born of the Holy Spirit, born again. It is not some future event. In fact, both requisites of receiving the Messiah and the spiritual birth go hand in hand in order to enter His kingdom. If one should declare, "*We cannot receive the Messiah in this life while in this corruptible flesh; it is not until we are in the kingdom that we can fully receive the Messiah,*" we would denounce such a doctrine as falsehood. We would respond, "*We cannot even enter the kingdom without receiving the Messiah in this life!*" By the same token, the text above speaks of being born apart from the natural genetic sense, thus being born by the will of יהוה.

John 3:5-8 Yahshua answered, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless someone is born of water and spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of Elohyim. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, It is necessary for you to be born from above. The wind blows wherever it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (Lexham English Bible).

Born from above, *born again* = Born of the Spirit: *a spiritual birth*.
When and how does it occur? : *That is the Question*.

While the wind is certainly invisible, it is doubtful that it actually blows wherever it wishes, as though the wind is a thinking entity. More than likely it is meant to be understood as allegorical. But there are many good people who actually believe that Yahshua intended for us to conclude that whoever is born of the Spirit becomes invisible: that invisibility is part of the evidence. When discussing the spiritual birth with an elderly friend years ago, he said, "*Well do you know anyone who is invisible and can walk through walls?*" The walking through walls had to do with Yahshua's sudden appearance in the upper room after His resurrection. My response to that question is, "*I don't know; I can't see them.*" He then said, "*Because it is a supernatural phenomenon, there's not a soul on earth including Yahshua, who had the spiritual birth until after His death and resurrection. Not until then did He become like the wind.*" But then I thought, *The wind cannot blow through walls*. Lazarus had been dead for four days, and he was a devout follower of Yahshua; we know that he was resurrected but there is no record of him becoming invisible and walking through walls. We may be certain it would have been recorded had it happened. It is the same with the other individuals resurrected by the Messiah. Not one of them became invisible.

Luke 17:20, 21 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of Elohyim should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of Elohyim comes not with observation: Neither shall they say, See here! Or, see there! For, behold, the kingdom of Elohyim is within you.

Some today believe that, according to the above passage, our Master meant that His kingdom is invisible and not a literal, tangible kingdom like the United Kingdom of England. They believe Messiah returned in AD 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem and set up His invisible kingdom at that time; this is called the Preterit View. But what did He mean by the above passage? We may rightly deduce that when He said, "*The kingdom of Elohyim is within you,*" He was not telling the wicked Pharisees that the kingdom was within *them*. The word *within*, in the Greek, is (G1787 ἐντός *en-tos'* From G1722; *inside* (adverb or noun). The word *entos*, as it is stated, is from #1722, ἐν, "*in*", *at*, (up-) *on*, *by*, *about*, *after*, *against*, *among*, *before*...

Some margins for this word *within*, give us the word *among*. Since the wicked are not part of the righteous kingdom, we can only conclude that He told them that the kingdom of Elohyim was *among* them, or *before* them, certainly not within *them*. He would have been referring therefore to Himself and His band of disciples. By the same token, we are not at liberty to say that the coming kingdom itself is invisible, but rather, the kingdom of the Almighty is

“within” the righteous, and it makes its way, not by pomp and grandiose display, but by silence, decency, and order, and in that sense of the word, it is invisible but only to the wicked.

Others, as we have noted earlier, have in a similar manner concluded that the person born of the Spirit being likened to the Wind, must therefore also be invisible. This was the salient teaching of Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God. Please consider, if we are to understand that the righteous *kingdom* that presently exists in the hearts and lives of the believers is only invisible to the wicked, perhaps in the same manner, when our Master taught us that we must be born of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8), He was not intending for us to think that whoever is born of the Spirit must therefore become invisible, but rather that such an *experience* is invisible: but only to the wicked. True, Messiah spoke of only two births: the natural and the spiritual, but He gave not the slightest intimation that while the first is visible to the sight and the other invisible, the *person* becomes invisible. The contrast is only that the spiritual person can be in the midst of those who are totally unspiritual, but they are not able to relate to his or her spirituality. It is foreign to them. It is undiscernible like the wind. They have experienced no more than the natural birth while the spiritual person has had both the natural and the spiritual. Contrary to the Armstrong teaching, Yahshua had this very experience throughout the entirety of His life here on earth, from His birth to the cross...*He was like the wind.*

John 8:14 Yahshua answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

John 3:7, 8 Do not be surprised that I say to you, It is necessary for you to have a second birth. The wind goes where its pleasure takes it, and the sound of it comes to your ears, but you are unable to say where it comes from and where it goes: so it is with everyone whose birth is from the Spirit. (Bible in Basic English).

As we can see by the statement of our Master Himself, likening His movements to the wind, He must have been born of the Spirit here in this life after all. Yahshua was born of the Spirit: not born *again* as we must be, for His spiritual walk began at His natural birth. He was born with an advantage over the carnal nature...from birth. Yes, an advantage; and this is the focal point of the spiritual birth: one nature must ultimately prevail over the other. That is why we must be born from above here and now. We were born with the carnal nature, necessitating the spiritual birth, making it possible that *we too* may have the advantage over the carnal nature! If we are born only once (the natural) we'll die twice (the first and second deaths); if we are born twice (the physical and the spiritual) we'll die only once (only the natural). In this life, our experience will be like that of the Messiah. We wonder at how teachers of the Word could have somehow overlooked Messiah's clear comparison of Himself to the wind. Read the following passage from the AUV-NT: *An Understandable Version of the NT*:

1st Corinthians 2:14, 15 Now the natural person [**Note:** Since this person is contrasted with the spiritual person of verse 15, it is taken here to mean the person without the Holy Spirit] does not receive the things [**i.e.**, truths] revealed by the Holy Spirit of Elohyim, because they are [considered] foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them because they must be discerned by using spiritual judgment [**i.e.**, judgment aided by the Holy Spirit]. But the spiritual person [**i.e.**, one who has the Holy Spirit] is able to discern all things [**i.e.**, has the ability to make right judgments about things], and he himself [**i.e.**, his conduct] cannot be [critically] discerned by any [unbelieving] man.

And so, we may become aware of the intent of our Master's words to Nicodemus, in that the contrast between the natural birth and the spiritual birth is simply that the person born of the Spirit lives in a different, indiscernible atmosphere than his natural counterpart. Their interests, goals and attitudes are diametrically opposite of each other. They both still eat food and live in a natural world and are therefore similar on that level, but as the natural person is only under the control of his sinful nature, the spiritual person is now under the mighty control of the Holy

Spirit. Think about it: if the adversary has such control over his children, cannot the Almighty control His? The only reason we don't see more examples of the Spirit-filled life is because the adversary has made sure to keep people confused about the whole matter. *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (Hosea 4:6). Yahshua and John were spiritual prototypes.

Luke 7:33-5 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and you say, He has a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and you say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a drunkard, a friend of publicans and sinners! But Wisdom is justified of all her children.

Consider, if the spiritual person is born of the Ruakh Haqadosh as of a spiritual Mother, our Master calls her Wisdom (as in Proverbs 8), which in Hebrew is *Khokma*. Did the Messiah not have the Holy Spirit in His life guiding and comforting Him as a mother would do? Does the believer have the same blessing? He said in John 14:17, *the world* cannot receive the Holy Spirit. One difference between the physical birth and the spiritual, is that in order to be born spiritually, one must die to the fallen, sinful nature (John 12:24). The kernel of wheat must fall into the ground and die before it can produce fruit. In like manner, the carnal nature must die prior to the conception and birth. This is why the spiritual birth is a rare thing in this age of the world. People go into their baptismal grave with a carnal nature still alive, and come back up unchanged. But the evidence of a changed heart is a changed life. The word kernel in the Greek is *kikkos*, while carnal in the Greek is *sarkikkos*: both words are synonymous in both languages.

John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say to you, That a kernel of wheat, unless it fall and die in the ground, remaineth alone; but if it die, it produceth numerous fruits. (Murdock).

John 12:24, 25 It is a fact that a grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die before it can grow and produce much more wheat. If it never dies, it will never be more than a single seed. Whoever loves the life they have now will lose it. But whoever is willing to give up their life in this world will keep it. They will have eternal life. (ERV).

The Messiah likened the rebirth of the spiritual nature with that of the plant kingdom. Can we be born into His spiritual kingdom here and now, or is it an impossibility in this present life? One thing is for certain: the goal of the gospel is to transform the life from the slavery of sin to freedom and power in righteousness. Those who believe they can be born again in this present life and yet live in slavery to sin are not pursuing the goal of the gospel: that of living a victorious life. They are not a sermon in shoes; they are a contradiction in shoes. Those who believe they cannot be born again in this present life on the other hand, due to the overwhelming power of sin and their submission to it, under that frame of mind, rightly conclude that the born again experience must happen in the future kingdom. It seems that neither of the two ideologies is quite willing to pay the price of the gospel, that of self-denial and bearing the cross. So few seem to be willing to go through the agony of the death struggle. They would rather commit suicide than face the embarrassment of having to confess their sins, repent of them and forsake them. Many have gone to such an extreme when all the while they could have simply obeyed the gospel order of dying to sin, and then entering into a whole new wonderful life of righteousness. The spiritual living is easy after we have died to sin. How very sad that such a tremendous blessing is tossed aside through human reasoning. Though it is a gift that is offered, we must step forward to receive it. How serious are we in this matter of spirituality? Let us not so easily dismiss such a treasure as this. Our hope of eternal life and the honor of our Creator are involved. We can take possession of this heavenly treasure; it is generously offered to us, not only that we may have eternal life in the great hereafter, but that we may live victoriously in the great here and now.

Concept Two

The Two Great Deceptions

Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

By taking away the keys of knowledge, ministers will not enter the kingdom themselves, and those who might have entered had they not been deceived, they prevented. What is the great deception that could possibly keep people out of the kingdom? There are two great deceptions. The first deception is to teach people they can be born again while still living a life of sin, or by not defining the parameters between sin and righteousness. *“Just rely on the finished work of Jesus on the cross, and when God looks at you, He’ll see Jesus.”* So goes the reasoning of this popular teaching. This school of thought has most of the religious world secure in its clutches. Though they would never verbally admit to it, they are promoting a life of unrighteousness—teaching men to break from the least to the greatest of יהוה’s commandments. A life without Law is not liberty. Grace is not an excuse for disobedience. Life without Law is not grace; it is disgrace. The evidence of a changed heart is a changed life. Because of such a concept, Judaism, which believes in personal accountability, says, *“Jesus is a good deal!”* But even the Berith Qadashah (New Testament) says Messiah will judge everyone according to their works.

The irony of this mindset is that they also teach some good moral ethics! They teach that marriage is between a man and a woman; that premarital sex is a sin; that materialism is idolatry, and Halloween is worship of the dead. They take a militant stand against these corrupt practices of the world and they are to be commended for doing so. But ironically, they seem to be in a spiritual slumber when it comes to how they address and worship the Creator of the Universe. Though they disavow the Roman Catholic festival of Halloween, they are infatuated with the other festivals of Rome...including the Venerable Day of the Sun, otherwise known as the Sunday. They fail to recognize that they are celebrating the Mass of Christ on December 25th...otherwise known as the ChristMass, claiming that Christ was born on that day, despite the knowing lack of evidence. They openly profess that the Christian cannot live a life free from the vilifying power of sin and they thus remain in bondage to it. This is School Number One.

Those in School Two, looking on this conflict between the practice and the profession know that when a person is truly born again he will cease to live a life of sin. But in common with School One, they are all too familiar with the weakness of the flesh and the overwhelming power of sin. So along with their fellow Christians in School One, they declare themselves to be sinners, and rightly so. However,

1st John 3:9 Whosoever is born of Elohyim doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of Elohyim.

School Two then is not afraid to face that baffling and threatening word *cannot* in 1st John 3:9. Just as they honestly confess that they cannot live without sin in this life, they equally acknowledge that whenever the born-again event really happens, they will be at the point when they cannot live any longer in sin. Their logical conclusion therefore is that one cannot be born from above in this present life. They say that they must wait until they die physically, and on that great resurrection day, when they rise into the coming kingdom of Elohyim as spirit beings, that is when they’ll *finally* be born again.

They state that even Yahshua could have sinned (which is true), and therefore He is the proof that the spiritual birth cannot occur in this present life. But is that the truth? Was Lucifer not a spirit being, walking up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, in the very Presence of Elohyim? Was there not war in heaven because a spirit being fell into sin? Instead of Yahshua being proof that one cannot be born from above in this life because He was capable of sinning, He is actually proof of the exact opposite. Was He not born of the Spirit? Joseph wasn’t His father. Mary was a young virgin, but Joseph knowing that he had not impregnated her, and not understanding yet the nature of her pregnancy, was going to put her away. Notice Matthew 1:20:

While he was thinking about this, an angel of יהוה appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. (GNB).

Yahshua was conceived and born of the Holy Spirit as an uncircumcised human being; He was circumcised on the eighth day. We mention the fact that He was born uncircumcised for this most important point: He shared in the lot of all humankind. We say humankind as opposed to mankind in that even women are born with an uncircumcised heart. But this is where the division comes in the experience of Yahshua; while He bore the lot of physical uncircumcision, He had a circumcised heart, and on the eighth day of His natural life, His flesh conformed to His spirit as it must be with us all. He could have sinned as a Spirit-filled human being both before and after His resurrection. No one becomes a robot incapable of making choices for good or for evil...ever. The only reason a person comes to a point where he cannot sin *is because he will not* sin—he has gained the mastery over sin; over his fallen nature. Evidently we'll need to examine the word *cannot* in 1st John 3:9 with a fine tooth comb, and we shall. But for right now,

If, as some have thought, the born again experience is nothing more than the resurrection, then Yahshua, in essence, said to Nicodemus, "*Do not marvel that I say unto you, 'You must be resurrected.'*" Nicodemus wasn't an unbelieving Sadducee, one who didn't believe in the resurrection; he was a devout Pharisee, one who strongly believed in the resurrection. It would be absurd to try to convince a Pharisee that he needed to believe in something he already believed in. The Pharisees were at swords points with the Sadducees over this very matter of the resurrection. Nicodemus was already teaching the same thing (the resurrection), and was himself looking forward to the grand and glorious event of the resurrection. It would be like telling a Jewish Rabbi, "*Do not be surprised when I say to you, you must not eat pork.*" He'd probably be offended that you would say that to him.

If the spiritual birth really means resurrection, a Sadducee would have been surprised at the Master's statement but certainly not a Pharisee. That being the case, we can only conclude Yahshua must have meant something other than resurrection. Since Nicodemus was a strong believer/defender of the resurrection he would not have been incredulous at Messiah's words. Because he was astonished we then know that he understood Yahshua's phrase *born again* to be something totally different than what he had ever heard of before.

When Messiah likened the spiritual person to the wind, did He intend for intelligent people to conclude by His statement that spiritual people must be invisible? The reason millions of Christians are eating pork today is because they fail or refuse to accept Peter's explanation of the vision he had (as recorded in Acts chapter ten) that the unclean beasts were *representative* of the gentile nations: nothing more, and nothing less.

When Messiah said we are not to cast our pearls before the swine nor give that which is holy to the dogs, did He think rational people would take Him literal? Few people even possess any pearls, nor do very many folks ever encounter a hog. He was talking about ungrateful and thoughtless people who mock at spiritual themes. Come now, let us be reasonable. "*Be not children in your understanding*" (1st Corinthians 14:20).

While the wind is invisible its manifestations are very visible; it is audible (*you hear the sound thereof*), and even palpable. This wouldn't be the case with "spirit beings": you wouldn't be able to hear or feel them. Obviously the wind is only allegorical. Yahshua taught us that spiritual people are known by the spiritual fruits they bear (Matthew 7:16-20). There is a spiritual power behind a righteous person producing heavenly beautiful traits of character.

So, just as we can see the reality of the wind in the trees and the grandiose waves of the sea, so can we see the effect of the Holy Spirit upon the converted person once they have given their heart, and surrendered their life to the Messiah. Thieves stop stealing and start giving; liars start telling the truth; the hateful start loving; the angry becomes calm; the drunkard becomes sober; the prodigal becomes the prodigy; the killers become martyrs. Some spiritual power far beyond their own will power has taken over and changed them for the better. Now it is their will connected to His power. They have become a new creation; it is the mysterious power of the wind—the power of the Holy Spirit. This very word for wind in the Hebrew is the same word

for Spirit: Ruakh. The Ruakh HaQadosh רוח הקדוש (the Holy Spirit) is moving gently upon the face of the roaring deep over our troubled souls, bringing peace (Genesis 1:2).

2nd Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in the Messiah, he is a new creation. Old things have disappeared, and look!—all things have become new! (ISV).

Yahshua our Master Teacher drew a comparison between being born again, and born of the Spirit; they are one and the same. Though the Spirit is invisible, the effects upon the life of the redeemed are very visible, stirring up new desires for righteousness and blowing away all the hereditary and cultivated propensities for evil. It is a supernatural work bringing a supernatural element into human nature. It is divine. In fact, we could not be made partakers of the divine nature in this life apart from the spiritual birth.

2nd Peter 1:4-8 Through these he has given us his precious and wonderful promises, so that through them you may participate in **the divine nature**, seeing that you have escaped the corruption that is in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, you must make every effort to supplement your faith with moral character, your moral character with knowledge, your knowledge with self-control, your self-control with endurance, your endurance with righteousness, your righteousness with brotherly kindness, and your brotherly kindness with love. For if you possess these qualities, and if they continue to increase among you, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in attaining a full knowledge of our Master Yahshua, the Messiah. (ISV).

Baptism is like breaking the water in childbirth. As the amniotic membrane ruptures, washing the baby down the birth canal and out into life, so it is in the spiritual. The baby began as a fertilized egg in the darkness of the womb in the natural; the spiritual person started out as a carnal mind in a huge ovum: the world of darkness. We were conceived in darkness but we grew into the light. This spiritual phenomenon happens in this life, and not in a future resurrection. Before Messiah returns He sends forth His angels to place His signature on all those who sigh and cry for all the abominations being done in the earth (Ezekiel 9:4). He makes the grand proclamation before He returns,

Revelation 22:11, 12 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

The resurrection will not change the character. Whoever goes to their grave as a mocker will come up as a mocker but not in the resurrection of the righteous. *“Let him that is holy be holy still.”* It is in this life that the character is formed; but there’ll be no growing in grace if there has been no birth: no spiritual birth. We’ll only continue to play the game of religion until we come to the realization that we must be born again—hopefully not too late. The fruits of the Holy Spirit constitute our “passport” into the heavenly kingdom, but there’ll be no blossoming, colorful fruit if there has been no birth. Character is all that we take with us into the heavenly kingdom, and we may rest assured, there’ll enter no poisonous fruit into that fair land. There’ll be no impatient, proud, hateful, greedy, lascivious, depressing people in the kingdom of יהוה.

Just as the wind can be heard, so it is in the life of the righteous. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak. Just as the wind can be felt, even so the life of the Righteous is a strong influence on everyone around him or her. Being born of the Spirit does not mean we’ll become invisible spirit beings, but that the invisible Spirit is living within our soul temple here and now bringing us into spiritual maturity as a bride preparing to meet her Groom, and not merely a begotten embryo or fetus. John didn’t say, *“Spiritual embryos and fetuses, let no one deceive you...”* He said, *“Little children...”* (1st John 3:7). Children are little people who have been born from their mother’s womb. All who are born of the Spirit are the children of יהוה.

Yahshua did not *become* the Son of יהוה at His resurrection; He was declared such at His baptism (Matthew 3:17). He was our example in all things. The reason the Father was well pleased in His Son, is because He obeyed the will of His Father (John 8:28-29). He said, *"I do always those things that please Him."* In this context He was referring to the sacrificial death He would die in our behalf. So goes the old gospel song: *"He paid a debt He did not owe; I owed a debt I could not pay; I needed someone to wash my sins away. And now I sing a brand new song, Amazing Grace! Yahshua paid a debt that I could never pay."* This is the inevitable turning point in the heart of every believer: the cross of Calvary—the old rugged cross. This was the turning point in the heart and soul of Nicodemus that fateful night.

Rabbi Yahshua, in His conversation with Nicodemus, mysteriously likened Himself to the brazen serpent on the pole that Moses had made (John 3:14). As the murmuring Israelites were dying through the venomous bites of the serpents, יהוה instructed Moses to form a brazen serpent on a pole and charge the repentant to look upon it and live (Numbers 21:8). The insolent and the arrogant mocked at the idea of looking on a symbol of the very thing that was killing them and they perished in their pride. *"All these things were written for our admonition upon whom the end of the age has come"* (1st Corinthians 10:11). We must look to Yahshua, bleeding and dying on a Roman cross, suffering the payment of our sins. If we are grieved that our sin is the reason He died, then spiritual conception has taken place and we are begotten. Just as an embryo develops into a fetus through nine months of darkness, so in the spirit: though we are begotten at conception, we are not immediately born. We must be more than sorry for our sins: we must be willing to give them up and cast them out, no matter how hard it may be. When we have died to sin, then we are born again—resurrected unto newness of Life. We may still make mistakes but our heart is set now on pursuing holiness, *wholeness* to do His will.

Look upon Yahshua suffering for our sins...and live. Is that asking too much of us? To just look and live? He bore our sins; He paid the ransom for our souls; and all we have to do is look to Him...*and live*. The life we live will be in harmony with יהוה's wonderful Law, the Torah. The Torah itself cannot save us. So many in the Hebrew Roots/Messianic movement keep the Shabbath & the Mokedim holy convocations; they eat kosher, read the Torah parashas, wear the tsitsith, cover with the talith...but they're lost. They have a form of piety, but sadly deny the power thereof. They reject the spiritual birth and spiritual resurrection. The ironic part is, they believe in the Messiah. Without the shedding of His blood however, there is no remission of our sins (Hebrews 9:22). If we are projecting any other message to the world than this, we are taking the name of יהוה in vain. We are misrepresenting His character, and character is the mirror image of who really has our heart. The question is, *Who really does have our heart?*

Yahshua was, through His life, the Lamb of Yah who taketh away the sin of the world; but when He bore our iniquities on the cross, He became the sin-offering for us who knew no sin that we might become righteous through Him. (John 1:29; Isaiah 53; & 2nd Corinthians 5:21). Thus we have the before/after picture of our Redeemer: an innocent lamb before the cross, and a serpent upon the cross as He explained to Nicodemus. His visage was marred more than any man's (Isaiah 53). He bore our guilt. He died for our sins in which he had no share that we might partake of His righteousness in which we had no share. By His stripes we are healed.

The new birth is a rare experience in this age of the world. Whereas Yahshua compared the spiritual birth to the natural and how baptism is symbolic of the breaking of the water in birth, Shaul in Romans 7:1-3 compared baptism to the death and burial of the old nature of sin, and the resurrection unto the new spiritual nature. In this Biblical analogy the spiritual birth is typified by a *spiritual* resurrection. So the emphasis on the part of School Two about the born again experience being the physical resurrection in essence supplants the spiritual resurrection unto newness of life here and now.

Proverbs 23:7 For as he reasons in his heart, so is he! (LITV).

The concept and experience of being born of the Spirit is an *empowerment* for us to have the conquest over the fallen nature! Both schools acquiesce to the overwhelming power of sin. The first school says that "we don't need to concern ourselves with overcoming sin. Christ is the only One to have ever done it, and is the only One capable of doing it, and we who are born

again reap the benefits of His conquest over sin. And furthermore, if we even try to conquer sin, we'll inevitably drift into a works oriented religion of self-righteousness." Born again without the personal victory; winning the cup without even running the race!

Consider further, if Yahshua had not been born of the Spirit until He resurrected, and the resurrection is the only time we'll finally be free from sin, then He would have been disqualified as the perfect sinless lamb of Yah that taketh away the sin of the world. He did not need to wait till His resurrection; He told Martha, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" It is through His mighty resurrection power that we also may be resurrected unto newness of Life. This is more than good news—this is the most wonderful news the fallen race of Adam could ever hope to hear. Oh that we may be listening.

When the Messiah gave the parable of the sower of the good gospel seed (Matthew 13), He gave the illustration of four conditions of the heart. If the heart is too hard for the gospel seed to take root in, the crows will surely come and devour that seed. Let us break up our hard-hearted proud spirit and not let anyone take our crown of Life. We may have a hard heart within us but there are evil forces outside of us whose business it is to take away our crown of Life.

If we are not born of the Spirit, we are yet carnal and it is the carnal mind that is at enmity against the Law of יהוה (Romans 8:7). It is impossible for it to be subject to His Law. It is not impossible to go through the motions of an outward obedience however. We may learn to read the Scriptures in Hebrew, recite Jewish prayers, and really look the part, but unless we have been born of the Spirit, we'll miss the forest for the trees; we'll obey the letter of the Law, and miss the deeper spirit of the Law. Under those circumstances, sin will have access to the soul. If we claim to love His Law but reject the spiritual birth unto newness of life, then we are trying to serve two masters. We'll wind up with a form of religion but deny the power of a consecrated righteous heart. And ultimately it will be manifest in the life. To deny the spiritual birth here and now is a declaration of surrender to the big bad wolf of sin. Do we really need to be so afraid of the big bad wolf? Is he badder than the Big Bad Shepherd? Yahshua is the gentle and good Shepherd to the sheep but He's bad news to the wolves! Let us not forget that wolves kill sheep.

Concept Three

The Difference Between Spirit and Spiritual

*Whosoever is born of יהוה doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him:
and he cannot sin, because he is born of יהוה. (1st John 3:9 KJV).*

School Two is eager to expose anyone claiming the Born-Again (spiritual birth) experience as deceived. They ask, “*Can you, and do you still commit sin?*” Almost without fail, every believer faced with that devastating question is thrown into a dilemma. They can either say yes, which would presumably nullify their claim; or they can say something like, “*Yes, I’m a sinner, but I’m clothed in the righteousness of the good Lord, and when God looks at me, He sees Jesus; not of works lest any man should boast, you know.*” Of course, he could also respond with 1st John 1:9, which says, “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” At this point his assailant will counter, “*Yes, that is all true, but the fact remains that you are still sinning, which indicates that you have not yet been born again; you have not yet been born a ‘spirit being.’*” It is at this stage in the discussion, the novel concept of *the spirit being* is introduced. They’ll remind us of how Yahshua spoke of only two births: the natural and the spiritual. By using the term *spiritual* however (as opposed to *spirit*), they reveal the inevitable weak point in their argument, as we shall discover. *What is the difference?*

The Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well sought an honest answer to her sincere question regarding acceptable worship. The Messiah gave her a frank, unequivocal answer: “*The Father is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth,*” spiritually and truthfully. (See John 4:22). He made no mention of spirit-beings worshiping Him in the World Tomorrow. He’s seeking them right now. School Two believes in the new birth event, but not in this present life. They teach that to be born of the Spirit (John 3:8), means to be born a ‘spirit-being’...in the coming kingdom of the World Tomorrow. They are surprised if you should ask them, “*Where does it ever mention these spirit-beings in the coming age?*” They even seem to feel a little embarrassed for your apparent lack of Scriptural knowledge for not being savvy on this Plain Truth. Surely everybody knows about the spirit-beings of the coming kingdom!

Most of Christendom in fact, teaches the concept of the redeemed being transformed into celibate spirit-beings in heaven. School Two, while rejecting the heaven doctrine, has somehow espoused the spirit-being doctrine. To prove it they direct you to 1st John 3:2. They say, “*You see, when Yahshua returns, we’ll be just like Him. Just look at Him in Revelation 1:12-16: clothed in a garment down to His feet; hair like wool as white as snow; eyes like a flame of fire; voice like the roar of the ocean; seven stars in His right hand; a sharp sword coming out of His mouth; His countenance as bright as the noon-day sun; His feet like fine bronze!*” “*Now there’s a spirit-being! And that’s what we’ll be like!*” When we point out that He is *still a man* (v. 12), though glorified to be sure (1st Corinthians 15:35-50), and that yes, we’ll be glorified as well (changed from this present corruptible to incorruptible flesh), and that Yahshua *wasn’t invisible* in John’s vision, and that John is making use of highly symbolic language (a sword coming out of His mouth?), the idea of spirit-beings must be reconsidered. Even the patriarch Job, when meditating upon the resurrection, declared,

Job 19:25-27 For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And *though* after my skin worms destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see Elohyim: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

Yes, the resurrection is all about glorified human beings. We must not forget the incident that occurred toward the end of the day of Messiah’s resurrection when He appeared to His

disciples in the upper room; was He a spirit, and did He walk through the wall? Let us see if such a notion is really recorded in the written account.

Luke 24:36-45 Now while they were talking about this, Yahshua Himself took His stand among them and said to them, Peace (freedom from all the distresses that are experienced as the result of sin) be to you! But they were so startled and terrified that they thought they saw a spirit. And He said to them, Why are you disturbed and troubled, and why do such doubts and questionings arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself! Feel and handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while [since] they still could not believe it for sheer joy and marveled, He said to them, Have you anything here to eat? They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, And He took [it] and ate [it] before them. Then He said to them, This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything which is written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He [thoroughly] opened up their minds to understand the Scriptures, (AMP)

All those who promote the concept of the righteous becoming spirit-beings in the coming kingdom, when confronted with this unambiguous incident, tell us that the Messiah was merely manifesting Himself to the disciples as a human being in a manner they could relate to. So our question therefore would have to be, "*Are we to understand then that He really was a spirit-being and not a flesh and bone human being after all, like He said?*" He outright told them that He was *not* a spirit being. Perhaps He later explained to the disciples that what He told them that evening in the upper room was not to be taken literally, that He actually was a spirit-being *without* flesh and bones and without the need to eat food; that He was only manifesting Himself to them in a way that they could relate to. It is just not recorded and we in the present time simply need to accept it by faith. It is highly unlikely that He would have lied to them. The *Plain Truth* is, His disciples were the very few on earth that He could speak unequivocally to. We cannot negate the fact that this incident occurred *after* His resurrection. This means then, that if He is our example in all things, whatever happened to be His *recorded* experience after His resurrection must be ours as well.

Matthew 13:10, 11 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Jon 18:20 Yahshua answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

Because Yahshua wasn't recognized earlier that day in His walk to Emmaus with the two believers, some have thought something supernatural was going on. Then later when these same two men returned to Jerusalem and came into the upper room where the eleven disciples were, at which time Yahshua also entered the room, some have implied that He walked through the wall. There were several other disciples besides the eleven however, these men being two of them; and they were all probably coming and going throughout the day, comparing their stories with one another. Yahshua could easily have entered the room with the other two men, His head covered with a tallit, through the open door. The text doesn't say how He entered the room. We don't doubt for a moment that He easily could have just appeared or have walked through a wall if He wanted to, or He could have merely turned the locked handle and it would have opened for Him. But He could have done all those same things before He died and resurrected. Anyone who can walk on water and raise the dead can surely do lesser things like appearing in a locked room. Even Phillip could appear and disappear by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:39 & 40), and this was quite some time before he had died and was resurrected.

Luke 24:16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

This is not to be understood of any change in the shape of His body, or the features of His face. As soon as their eyes were opened, which before had been covered, they knew Him perfectly well. Had there been any alteration made in Him that he could not have been known, there would have been no need of merely covering their eyes. The resurrection and the spiritual birth are two different things. Yahshua made it clear that in His resurrected state, He was not an ethereal spirit being. He was a glorified *human* being. The issue in 1st Corinthians 15:50 is the contrast between corruptible flesh and glorified flesh that alone can inherit the kingdom. This present flesh is subject to death and we need incorruptible flesh and blood. That testifies therefore that glorified *flesh* will inherit the kingdom. However, we may rest assured that we'll not even see the kingdom of יהוה unless we have been born of the Spirit here and now.

The weakness in this Armstrong doctrine is exposed in the difference between spirit and spiritual. When we accept the sacrifice of Yahshua we are spiritually *conceived*. It is the Torah of יהוה that then *converts* the soul (Psalm 19:7). This is the spiritual gestation period. As we learn the ways of righteousness and cast out sin after sin, we come to the point of full surrender and are born spiritually. We are born not as invisible spirits in the sweet by and by; we are born *spiritually* in the sweet here and now.

No one will be lost for believing in and acting upon the Word of the Almighty even if he may have misunderstood some of His words. If a person honestly believed Yahshua meant for us to be born again in this life, and that this full surrender of his soul would empower him to live a life of obedience, when he dies and is resurrected he is told, *"My son, you misunderstood My words in regard to being born again; it is now that you have been resurrected that you are finally born again,"* our honest question is, would he be lost for his misunderstanding? Some would answer yes, as though such a one was under the power of darkness; but we must answer, not at all. Even under such a mistaken belief, the effect was to produce a life of holiness. He'll not say to such a one, *"Depart from Me ye worker of Sincerity, I never knew you."* Instead He'll say, *"Well done thou good and faithful servant; you were faithful over what you understood, and in your soul it produced the good...enter thou into the joy of salvation."*

What will be the fate however of the one who mocks at or denies the concept that being born of the Spirit must be experienced in this life *in order to be* a part of the resurrection of the just? The first person has nothing to lose if he is wrong; but this second person has everything to lose. And he will lose exponentially if he led others astray, causing them to forfeit their hope of the resurrection of the righteous too. That is why we read in James 3:1...

Brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers. You know that we who teach will be judged more severely. (GW).

Concept Four

The Last Straw

When all these arguments are finally exposed for the façades that they are, School Two has one last straw for which it desperately grasps.

1st John 3:9 Whosoever is born of יהוה doth not commit sin;
for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of Elohyim.

Though we have touched upon this mystery text throughout this treatise, it is time to examine it now more closely. Is this English translation in perfect harmony with the Greek from whence it was taken? Can we really come to a point of being free from the death grip of sin upon us? Wouldn't such a proposed liberty be excellent if such were really true in this life, freeing us up to do some wonderful things in righteousness, like healing the sick?

Sin is only formidable at first. We don't need to submit to sin—submit to יהוה, stand up to the adversary and he'll flee from you. He'll have to. The only reason sin is so prevalent is because it is all we have *known—we learned it*. But we can make a transition and start *unlearning* sin, and fill the vacuum with the knowledge of righteousness. Some are so confused they don't even believe that sin exists. One man told me, “*There's no such thing as sin; people just mishandle the good.*” I responded, “*Well do you know that the wages for mishandling the good is death?*” By confusing the terminology people confuse the reality. That is precisely why we must rightly divide the Word of Truth from man's erroneous doctrines (2nd Timothy 2:15).

The great question of life is not, “*What must I do to be successful in life,*” but rather, “*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*” The answer is, “*You must be born again.*” To stress our point, we must guard ourselves against the two major deceptions. As stated earlier, the first is that we can be born again without abandoning a life of sin. The second is that “*Since we cannot overcome sin while in this mortal flesh, we therefore cannot be born again until we enter the kingdom.*” Both lies paralyze the potential power within us, and that we must exercise.

The wonderful truth is, there is a clear path that leads to the kingdom: it is called the spiritual birth. And the way we are spiritually born; the way we win this war against the carnal nature is through *surrender*. It is the only war that is ever won through surrender. Mind you, the war is not between ourselves and the adversary, but rather between ourselves and יהוה: we have been resisting a full surrender of our proud and stubborn heart to Him. We've been on the broad path while thinking we were on the narrow path. What a strange paradox. Unlike the outright worldlings all around us, we camouflage our spiritual dearth with a form of religion. We may rest assured however, the eternal One reads the hearts of all. It is imperative that we understand the mystery text; for in it lies the secret to freedom. Let us read it from a direct translation of the Greek language from whence it was written. 1st John 3:9:

Those who are children of Elohyim do not continue to sin, for יהוה's very nature is in them;
and because יהוה is their Father, they cannot continue to sin. (GNB).

The obvious problem of course is in the word *commit*. Let us examine this English word. It is G4160 ποιέ *poy-eh'-o*. This Greek word has 50 possible definitions; *commit is # 14 in the list*. The 3rd and 4th definitions are *abide* and *agree*. The one who has been born of the Spirit does not abide in sin; does not agree with sin... *doesn't continue in sin*. By using the rigid word *commit* in the KJV, confusion has reigned in regard to the matter of the spiritual birth. Many versions such as the one we have chosen above translate it in accordance with the word *poyeh*, and thus clear the muddy waters made by the translators. On the last page of the Introductory of the 1611 KJV, the translators admit to changing the words: they even give the example of Acts 12:4, wherein they changed the word *Passover* into *Easter*! With this more accurate translation, let us reconsider what the text is actually saying.

When a child is born, he doesn't start walking right away. He must develop his muscles and his motor skills. So it is in the spiritual realm; we must grow in grace. But we can't begin growing of course until we've been born. There are folks up in their 70's and 80's who are still in the gestational stage refusing to be born. They do good things and go through the religious motions, but they voluntarily refuse to be born from above. The one who managed to escape the clutches of that artifice and were born, began their stumbling efforts to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

Proverbs 24:16 For a just *man* falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

School Two, standing by looking on, laugh and say, "You see, we told you that you are not yet born again; just look at you stumbling and falling day after day. You're not at a point where you cannot sin, so you have not yet been born again. Ha! Ha! Ha!" Instead of rejoicing that a toddler is learning to walk, they ridicule the toddler...while they linger in the womb, just waiting for the tomb. And thus they seal their doom.

The *just man falls*, sometimes *falls seven times* perhaps, into sins of infirmity through the surprise of temptation; but he *rises again* by repentance, he finds mercy with יהוה, and regains his stance. A justified man, though he doesn't fall from his righteousness, nor from the grace of the Almighty; yet he may fall into temptations of *surprise*. Though יהוה sometimes may permit the hand of violence to threaten him, temptations to assail his mind and afflictions to press down his body, he constantly emerges; and every time he passes through the furnace, he comes out brighter and more refined: more mature: *telios* in the Greek—perfect (Matthew 5:48).

Let us think this matter through; the word commit (*poyeho*) in the mystery text of 1st John 3:9 is used 576 times in 518 verses of the New Testament. Only in one other place (Luke 12:48) is the word *poyeho* (G4160) translated as *commit*. That is two places out of 576. As mentioned before, it has some 50 possible definitions. Because sincere souls who desire the spiritual birth make mistakes, and religious predators capitalize on a poorly translated word, "...doth not *commit* sin," many are driven to despair and go back to a life of sin, thinking holiness is just not possible in this life. It is the same situation with the misleading word *divorced* in Matthew 5:32. Most versions perpetuate the lie that the translators inserted into that passage in that, *whoever marries a divorced person commits adultery*. The Greek text says that whoever marries a person who is *separated* from a former spouse commits adultery, which of course would be true, but there is no sin in marrying the innocent party of a divorce—not according to the Torah (see Deuteronomy 24:1-4). Yahshua said not the slightest particle of the Torah or the Prophets would in any wise pass until all be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18). Who will we believe? Should we believe the Torah, the Prophets and Yahshua who stand as one, or should we believe religious predators who try to contradict that threefold cord? (See Ecclesiastes 4:12). No one commits adultery for marrying the innocent party of a divorce; nor does it annul the spiritual birth if a righteous person makes a mistake. Even if he makes seven mistakes in a day, so long as he repents, he has not lost his his spiritual birth. To say otherwise is to perpetuate the devil's lies. Unwise.

Since it is only through the ignorance of what the mystery text is actually saying, and the scoffer taking advantage of that ignorance, many have become discouraged, thinking that their sincere walk with the Saviour is but a sham. Our question therefore is this: *Is sin more powerful than our Redeemer who promises to save us from it?* Does the sin nature have the mastery over the one who sincerely seeks to be delivered from it? If sin will keep us out of the kingdom, and the only solution to the sin problem is the spiritual birth, what is the solution to the solution? How do we resolve this baffling mystery?

As is the case with every truth, we find that it always sails quietly and smoothly through the two extremes. Though the antagonist from School Two may intimidate his bewildered mate from School One, please observe how the conversation goes with the one who has been born of the Spirit *from School Three*, the one who believes in the redeeming blood of Yahshua for the remission of all the sins of his life, and yet also believes in personal accountability here and now. For it requires both the grace of our Redeemer through His shed blood in our behalf, *plus* our mutual commitment to Him through a life of obedience to get us in to His kingdom.

School

- 2) So, my friend, are you really born again?
- 3) Yes, I have been born of the Holy Spirit, the Ruakh Haqadosh; and you?
- 2) Oh no, I am only begotten right now because I am not yet resurrected into an invisible spirit being able to walk through walls.
- 3) You want to walk through walls?
- 2) That's what Yahshua did; plus John says that we'd live without sin: 1st John 3:9.
- 3) So are you saying that sin prevails in your life and that you are a servant of sin?
- 2) Well of course man: I'm not at the point wherein I *cannot* sin!
- 3) So as a minister in your church you are then serving two masters?
- 2) (Hesitatingly), Well that's rather a direct question, but I'm not able to live without sin.
- 3) Yahshua said that a man cannot serve two masters, sin and righteousness; that he can only serve one or the other, and the one he serves he will love...*but he will hate the other*. Do you believe the word *cannot* in Matthew 6:24? It is G1410 δύνανται, dunamai in both texts. It means that it is *impossible* to serve two masters, and by the same token it is impossible for the one spiritually born to continue living a life of sin.
- 2) Yes man, but surely you know that before we are born, we are only begotten; the Lord spoke of only two births: the natural and the spiritual.
- 3) You are correct in saying that we cannot be born before we are begotten; this applies to both the natural birth and the spiritual. Many in the church world are rightly known as "Sunday Christians" because they responded once to the Saviour's call to repentance, but their church did not instruct them as to what they needed to repent of, and they thus live a defeated life. To make matters worse, their church lulls them into a false security into thinking they'll be saved in sin rather than from it, through the merits of the sinless Saviour.
- 2) That is exactly my point; we will be held accountable for our own actions. And because we are not able to live an unbroken victorious life over sin, we are not yet born again: a simple matter of cause and effect. That is why I do not superficially claim to be born again as the poor souls in the church world. We can only be begotten in this present life. We cannot be born again until we cannot live without sin...and walk through walls like our Lord.
- 3) What is the Greek word for *born* in 1st John 3:9?
- 2) Why it is G1080 γεννάω, gennaō; a word that completely proves my point that no one can be born until they have come to a point of sinlessness. Therefore I say that we are only *begotten* in this life due to the corruptible flesh that we are presently in.
- 3) What is the Greek word for *begotten*, as in, let us say, 1st John 5:18?

1st John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of Elohyim sinneth not; but he that is begotten of Elohyim keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

- 2) That is the perfect text to demonstrate the difference between those claiming to be born again, and the reality of being only begotten! Thank you for bringing it up, even though it is not to your advantage, since you obviously believe you are born again right now.
- 3) Yes, it is a good text, I must confess. So what is the Greek word for begotten in that text?
- 2) (Hesitatingly)...Why, it is gennaō.
- 3) And what is the Greek word for born in that text?
- 2) Well, I guess it is also gennaō.
- 3) Even though you and I are speaking in English, and we, in our language distinguish between begotten and born, John uses the same Greek word gennaō for both, doesn't he?
- 2) Yes, it appears that he does.
- 3) So once again, have you been begotten?
- 2) (Sensing that he is walking into an unavoidable trap), Yes, I've been begotten.
- 3) And are you still sinning?
- 2) Yes.
- 3) While it is true that one cannot be born before he has been begotten, we must face the cruel truth that not a soul on earth can claim to be born again if they are still living a life of sin.

Neither can a soul on earth claim to be *begotten* if they are yet living in sin. The argument goes both ways with the magic little word *gennao*, you see. Is the gospel that promises us victory over the kingdom of darkness nothing more than an impossible paradox? Since that text seems to imply an apparent impossibility to the spiritual birth, we obviously need a Scriptural definition for sin. The ready answer of course is that sin is the transgression of the Law (1st John 3:4). Is that the only definition?

It says in 1st John 5:17 that *all unrighteousness* is sin, and in Romans 14:23 that *whatever is not of faith* is sin. These texts shed more light on the matter of sin. The Hebrew word most often used is **חַטָּאת**, *khatath*, which means “*to miss the mark.*” The illustration behind that word has to do with a father who is a master marksman archer, training his son how to shoot an arrow from the bow. As the lad practices more and more every day, he hits the mark more and more, although he still sometimes misses the mark. Let us observe how most in the religious world are missing the mark by another Scriptural definition for sin: it is found in John 16:9.

John 16:8,9 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me;

It says there that it is a sin to not believe in the Messiah Yahshua. How can this apply to most of the believing world? What does it mean to *believe* in the Hebrew Messiah? For the Christian world we say, it is not enough to believe only in His sacrificial death to pay our ransom debt on the cross. It is not enough to believe that He rose from the grave on the third day and became the Conqueror over sin and death in our behalf. *We must believe His teachings.* To claim to love the Saviour while breaking His law is a contradiction in terms. He said plainly that He is the Lord of the Sabbath in Mark 2:28, but for the most part, those who claim to love Him break His Sabbath law. All the reasoning in the world for this parody will not suffice on the Day of Judgment however. Notice 1st John 2:4:

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

For many in the Messianic Hebrew Roots Movement we are compelled to say, you are no less guilty of refusing to believe in the Hebrew Messiah. We speak much on the Torah's requisite of at least two witnesses to establish a thing. Yahshua said in John 3:5 that if we are not born of the Spirit we cannot enter into His kingdom. He said in John 3:3 that except we be born again we cannot even see His kingdom. In plain view of these clear statements many not only err themselves but lead others into their destructive error.

The spiritual birth is beyond this temporal world in which we live. In essence, it is but a change of heart by which we transfer our love from the world and self to our blessed Redeemer. As marriage mystically binds the hearts of a man and woman wherein their commitment and love blossoms and grows into a wonderland, so is the spiritual birth. It is a declaration to the on-looking universe that we have chosen Yahshua to be the Lord and Master of our life right now. We have chosen Him above everything else. He is not interested in our ability to become invisible and walk through walls my friend; He is interested in our heart—for when the heart is right the life will correspond. It is not enough to give mental assent to the reality of Yahshua; even the devils believe in His existence. We must exercise faith in His sacrificial death, taking our sins upon Him. Yahshua tied our spiritual birth to His sacrificial death in the illustration of Moshe the Lawgiver lifting up the brazen serpent on the pole, just as He would one day be lifted up on the cross to bear our sins.

Only through the spiritual birth can we thus become the recipients of divine power to overcome the sins of the world and slay the evil inclination within. Only when we have been born from above can we live a life of righteousness and be effective in this warfare we were born into. *Of course* the adversary would hope that people would deny the spiritual birth! He doesn't care which side of the bridge we fall off of. *Of course* the adversary would go so far as to denounce all who believe they are born again in this life to be under the power of darkness. Let the student of Scripture remember that Yahshua explained in Matthew 12:22-32, that to equate

the work of the Holy Spirit with the kingdom of darkness *is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit*. This is a serious charge. Nearly all the Scriptural evidence laid out in this study is missing in the teaching of the two schools discussed throughout this writing. Have these passages been avoided because they are too revealing? Thousands have been swept away in the wake of this pernicious doctrine. Thousands have fallen under the hypnotic spell of the serpent in the tree: “*Yea, hath Yahshua said, ‘You must be born again,’ ...in this life?’*”

By using the invisible wind as the premise, then proceeding to the resurrection when we receive immortality, we then come to the hypnotic question: “*So again...when will our mortal bodies finally be born again?’*...followed by the hypnotic answer of course, “*Why, at the moment of the resurrection of our bodies!’*”

According to Black’s Law Dictionary, these are leading statements which are designed to lead the listener into whatever conclusion the speaker desires. It confuses the listener into thinking what the speaker is asking about is what he the listener is actually thinking. And the speaker is the one who assumes the role of conscience for the listener. He asks, “*When will our mortal bodies finally be born again?’*” Before he craftily answers the question for us however, we should ask him, “*Where does Yahshua ever say our mortal bodies will be born again?’*” “*You’ve gone from His allegorical statement about the wind to the resurrection and back to the spiritual birth in a subtle effort to equate the spiritual birth to a mere physical second birth.*”

In case the student of Scripture has failed to discern the ploy, the effort on the part of School Two is to disintegrate the divine nature of the spiritual birth by making it merely a physical phenomenon (*the resurrection of our mortal bodies*) which is a concept totally foreign to the Scripture (not the resurrection; but that the resurrection constitutes the spiritual birth). Words are powerful, but the Word of יהוה is much more powerful than all of man’s words to the contrary. What the second school thought was their big gun has really turned out to be their big demise; and there is a bigger gun still, as we are about to discover. We are confidently assured that the phrase “*born again*” appears a mere three times within all of Scripture. There is no mention of the several other times the same concept is discussed in great detail in the written Word (18 in all). For example, 1st John 3:7:

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

According to this passage, we may know that there are righteous people on the earth. Let it not be forgotten that it was יהוה who declared Job to be perfect in all His ways because he hated evil and loved righteousness. So living above sin is not as impossible as we have been told. A good example of this is in our own lives: few of us are tempted to rob a bank or gamble our money away in a casino. The adversary doesn’t waste his time tempting us to do something we have no interest in. The more we walk in the way of righteousness, the less pull sin has upon us. And we must remember that *temptation is not sin*. Do not accept for a moment the temptations and sinful thoughts that spring upon you as being in harmony with your own mind; repulse them as you would Satan himself. One pastor said, “*We’re not in a horizontal tug of war with the devil; we’re in a vertical chain of command with Yahshua at the top, us under Him, and Hasatan down at the very bottom.*” He is subject to us when the divine nature presides within us.

Only through the spiritual birth can we be the recipients of divine power to overcome the sins of the world and slay the evil inclination within. Only when we have the spiritual birth can we live a life of righteousness and be effective in this warfare we were born into. The text above verily assures us that we can live above sin as Yahshua lived. Let us see how such a thing could be possible in the same context; reading now 1st John 2:29:

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

To be born of Him of course signifies the spiritual birth. The evidence of the spiritual birth in this life is too great to avoid. To walk through walls is a shallow tradeoff for a victorious

life here and now. Let us not imagine we have some “deeper understanding” of this matter just because we take a stand in opposition to Babylon. To stand against deception is a good thing, but not with another deception. Only Truth is the antidote to error. And truth has a certain ring to it that our soul can respond to without ambiguity. Truth is not only verifiable, but it appeals to our reason: “Come now, let us reason together saith יהוה.” Truth doesn’t need to be propped up with man’s devices; it can and does stand alone without the support of anyone or anything. Like the prophet Eliyah on Mount Carmel standing against 850 prophets and priests of Baal, he alone was able to call down fire from heaven and consume the sacrifice. Nothing has changed.

Let us read the mystery text in reverse to prove our point: *“He that is not born of יהוה continues to live a life of sin; indeed, he cannot live above sin because the divine seed is not in him.”* Hopefully we can see how the thinking of man plays out through this reversal. While they may read it correctly in the text, their interpretation is reversed in their mind because they deny the victorious message that is written there. Let us undeceive ourselves.

The promise is that the divine seed will enter and remain within our souls when we ask for the spiritual birth. We must realize that this is not a work that we do; it is a work that He does. Take note of what it says in Jude 24:

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy...

Even though a righteous man *may* fall seven times, as we have already noted, it is not the end; he’ll keep getting back up until he is strong in every area of life; and in that way, יהוה is able to keep him from forever falling into the same sin. But such a blessing can only come to those who are born again. We must be born from above.

Concept Five

The Enigma of the Messianic

School One of course represents the vast majority of the Christian church world. They make it clear that they are not under the Law (Galatians 5:18). Even though Paul intended by that to mean we are not under the Law's condemnation (Galatians 3:13), most will adamantly tell you they are not under the Law's *jurisdiction*...as though the Law is detrimental.

Yahshua said in Mark 2:28 that He is Lord of the Sabbath; most Christians will say that He is Lord of their life, but they refuse to submit to His law of the Sabbath which is the seventh day of the week and not the Sunday. They say it boldly: *"We are not under the Law; the Law brings bondage."* We find in this a strange paradox. Yahshua never once claimed to be the Lord of the Sunday. Great things happened on the day after the Sabbath, but that did not transfer the sacredness and divine blessing from the Sabbath to the Sunday, making Sunday the new Sabbath. In essence, well-meaning followers of Christ are declaring, *"We are not under Christ's law."*

How can we claim to be born again into a kingdom of righteous laws when we refuse to obey those laws? It says in Isaiah 66:23 that in the coming kingdom we'll keep the Sabbath. Sunday-keepers are Sabbath-breakers, and Sabbath-keepers are Sunday-breakers. Which do you suppose has the better chance of entering the kingdom: Sabbath-breakers, or Sunday-breakers? No one can serve two masters; we must choose between the eternal Law of יהוה, and the ever changing laws of man.

The reason the Sabbath is crucial to our salvation is because it is the sign of His lordship over us, and that we are His by creation and redemption. Sanctification has to do with separating ourselves from the world. Believers cannot afford to compromise with any who rebel against the will of the Almighty. What would happen if they said, *"We're not under man's laws."* Modern ministers love that part of the divine Law commanding the tithe, calling it holy, but in the same breath they call the Sabbath, "Jewish." Most people seem to have an aversion to paying their taxes, but they do it faithfully just the same. They then are slipshod when it comes to the sacred tithe (10% of one's earnings). They say they just can't afford it this week, so they dole out a meager pittance, thus insulting the Almighty; but He doesn't need our tips. Would they tell their government, *"Sorry but we just couldn't afford to pay our taxes this year."* What if they sent their taxes to another country? Many will use the sacred tithe to support ministries that openly teach contrary to יהוה's Law. They teach their followers to break the Sabbath along with the other sacred festivals, yet they wholeheartedly embrace the pagan festivals of Rome. It is nothing less than providing ammunition to the enemy.

Exodus 31:13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am יהוה that doth sanctify you.

The war in heaven (Revelation 12:7-11) was moved to the earth and it has to do with our loyalty to our Maker's Law. The Almighty cannot afford another insurgence in His Paradise kingdom. We just came through 6,000 years of suffering sin and death because of intelligent spirit beings right in the kingdom of heaven refusing to submit to יהוה's Law. Satan declared, *"We're not under the Law; the Law brings bondage!"* All he accomplished was to transfer his allegiance from the divine law of Life and Liberty to the degrading law of sin and death.

Another danger is in thinking we are saved by merely our observance of the Sabbath and the Law. The major theme of discussion in the Messianic Movement involves all the intricacies of the Torah. Seldom do we hear of the plan of salvation. In fact, what is gaining momentum is the denial of the virgin birth, the preexistent Messiah, and the spiritual birth. The Father is seeking only those who will worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. (John 4:22). We cannot have the Holy Spirit while turning away from Truth; nor can we have the Truth while turning away from the Spirit. We'll not enter the kingdom unless we have them both.

What did Yahshua mean in His statement to Nicodemus that evening? His statement was in response to Nicodemus' opening address to Him. We cannot rightly come to any conclusions

on what someone said unless we first recognize the nature of that statement. Was it made in response to something said prior? And if so, that prior question or address must be included in the analysis. A good example is in the word, *therefore*: it signifies that what is about to be said is in response to something previously stated.

Here is the enigma of the Messianic: they say the born again experience cannot occur in this life while in the corruptible flesh, and that in fact will not occur until we're resurrected into the Presence of Elohim in the coming kingdom. They say even Yahshua was no exception to the rule—that He was not born of the Spirit until He died and resurrected. But we shall see by Nicodemus' address to Him, just the opposite is true.

John 3:2 One night he went to Yahshua and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by Elohim. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless the Almighty were with him." (GNB).

John 3:31-32 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

John 3:13 And no one has ever gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who came down from heaven." (GNB).

"We know that you came from the very Presence of Elohim." By that Nicodemus implied that Yahshua was either an emissary sent from the kingdom of Elohim, or that He was the very Son of Elohim sent on a mission from His Father to our world. Either way, He came from the heavenly kingdom to the earth. Some deny that Yahshua preexisted, but He made a distinctly clear statement to the contrary. Let us read John 17:5 from two different versions:

(CEV) Now, Father, give me back the glory that I had with you before the world was created.

(ESV) And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Yahshua responded to Nicodemus' respectful address connecting Him with the kingdom of Elohim with a rather startling statement. It was startling to the proud heart of the Pharisee on the one hand that even he was not righteous enough to enter the kingdom; but it was startling also in that He spoke in a very authoritative manner as One totally familiar with His Father's kingdom by making it clear that He actually came from it. Nicodemus recognized that Yahshua came from Elohim, and Yahshua acknowledged this recognition of Nicodemus.

We can plan a trip to India and do all the research about that kingdom, but how great a blessing should Providence permit us to encounter a citizen from that place right in our own hometown, and he even speaks perfect English! Of course he would speak with authority about the place he had come from. Yahshua proved that we don't need to go the kingdom to become born again—He *came* from the kingdom. Being born again is our passport into the kingdom. He didn't need to wait till He died and was resurrected; He *is* the resurrection. No one will be resurrected without His mighty resurrection power! Fail everything else in life friend, but don't get this wrong! Believe Yahshua's words! Act upon them, and pray for this change of heart: it is not some ethereal, ambiguous experience; it is something you can see the fruition of. We cannot change our stubborn, proud and angry heart, but He can, and He will if only we will seek him with all our heart. It is a supernatural work bringing a supernatural element into the human heart. It is a new birth invisible to the carnal world around us. Yahshua made the way of escape for us but we must take it. It does require a death to self and a resurrection unto newness of life, but it needs to happen here and now. If we fail to plan, we must plan to fail.

The concept of the spiritual birth goes back to the very beginning of human history. When יהוה told the serpent that He would put enmity between his seed and the seed of the woman, this was the first intimation of the gospel message (See Genesis 3:15). He said the seed of the righteous (woman) would crush the head of the serpent, though the serpent would bruise

His heel, speaking of Yahshua in His conquest over Hasatan and the kingdom of darkness. Almost immediately we see the drama between good and evil being played out. We have the story of Cain and Abel, and then on down the line to Isaac and Ishmael. Let us consider this latter story. May we open our eyes to behold wondrous things out of the Torah. Take note of Rav Shaul's (Paul's) sermon on the subject from Galatians 4:22 & 23:

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

What does it mean that Isaac was the son of promise? We know that יהוה had promised Abraham that Sarah would bear him a son in his old age, and it came to pass. But due to their lack of faith Abraham and Sarah followed the will of the flesh at the first and gave birth to a carnal son through their Egyptian handmaid Hagar. He grew up to represent the seed of the serpent to this very day. *But why is Isaac called the son of promise?* Note Galatians 4:28-31:

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Now Shaul declares that "*we, brethren,*" are equated with Isaac, children of promise. He then draws a contrast between the persecuting Ishmaelites born after the flesh, *and those who are born after the Spirit!* So we can see how the spiritual birth is mentioned many times throughout Scripture, and not "*a mere three times*" after all. We never find spiritual people persecuting the lovers of this world; it is always the other way around. To be born of the Spirit produces the fruits of the Spirit.

Please consider, when we are born naturally into this world, we are born of the flesh, like Ishmael. We reap the sad harvest of this carnal birth. After their mistake, Abraham and Sarah tried again, and this time came the seed of promise in the second birth of Isaac, and they reaped the glad harvest of the son born of the Spirit. So have all the families of the earth since that time. But even in this we must guard ourselves against another deception...

Some would have us believe that the evidence of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues, rather than being in possession of the fruits of righteousness. If it were possible, even the very elect will be deceived (Matthew 24:24). Deception is lurking on every hand; we must be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

The spiritual birth should not be a mystery to the Torah observant. Many of us were born into unrighteous homes and we had to struggle through hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil. We literally had to lift ourselves out of the swamplands of generational curses and strike out on our own. Some, like John the Baptist and Yahshua had the tremendous advantage of righteous parents to guide them in the way of uprightness from the womb. All they had to do was pick up the baton from that vantage point and were therefore a thousand miles ahead of the rest of us. But just as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin nor the leopard his spots, neither can we do righteousness who learned to do evil (Jeremiah 13:23). That is why we must be born again. As surely as we were born into sin, we can be born out of it if we will. Pray for the spiritual birth; it is the Father's will to grant it to you. And when you have it, the divine seed will remain within you preventing you from returning to a life of bondage to sin. Everything depends on the right action of your will. Maturity of character is the work of a lifetime, but it will not begin until you are born again. Even Simon Peter (Kefa), after walking with Yahshua for three and a half years, was told, "*When you are converted...strengthen thy brethren.*" (Luke 22:32). Conversion precedes the spiritual birth, the regeneration of the soul; it is the gestational period prior to the birth. Peter was one who followed Yahshua in the regeneration message, and when he was fully converted, after he denied his Master three times (Matthew 26:75), he went out and wept bitterly, and through that pain, was spiritually born; he was finally born again.

Concept Six

The Way we are Born of the Spirit

John 3:14, 15 As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, in the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. (GNB).

Hebrews 9:22 As Moses' Teachings tell us, blood was used to cleanse almost everything, because if no blood is shed, no sins can be forgiven. (GW).

Yahshua was the lamb of **יהוה** that takes away the sin of our soul (John 1:29), but when our sins accumulated upon Him, it changed His very image. If we can imagine the innocent sweetness of a lamb and compare that to a gruesome looking rattlesnake suspended from a pole, and then come to the sad realization that His horrible appearance was the result of His taking upon Himself our sins, it should lead us to repentance. It was the before and after picture of our suffering Saviour. He went to the cross an innocent lamb, but as the sins of the world began clinging to Him and He began to shed His blood in our behalf, from Gethsemane through the cruel beatings to the cross, both physically and spiritually, His visage was marred. Such a sacrifice should indeed lead us to repentance.

Isaiah 52:14 Many people were shocked when they saw him; he was so disfigured that he hardly looked human. (GNB).

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

The moment we express our sorrow through repentance, we have been begotten of the Father; this is the beginning of our spiritual journey; our conception. It was our stubborn rebellious character that incurred the death of the Prince of heaven, and it was on our behalf that He suffered and died. But conception is not enough. From this point a new desire to know Him awakens within us and we hunger to read His Word to find out more about our Redeemer. We begin the gestational period otherwise known as conversion. In the gestational period the fetus is floating around in a quiet little ocean in the darkness of its mother's womb. The phrase, "to be born" in Spanish is "dar la luz," which means "given to the light." It says in Psalm 119:105, that His Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. It is during this spiritual gestational period that we are coming to the light; coming to the spiritual birth. This period of time is the time of conversion: this is the Romans Seven man. Yahshua said that in order for us to enter His Paradise kingdom we must be converted. Conversion is when we stop walking away from Him and stop turning away our ear from hearing His Law. Proverbs 28:9:

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination.

We read in Psalm 19:7 that it is the Law of **יהוה** that converts the soul, so we turn to the Torah to learn His wonderful ways. We find that He gave us a perfect lifestyle to promote good health of mind, body, soul and spirit, and we begin to implement that lifestyle and reap the blessings that come through obedience. With every advancing step the heart is tested a little closer. Will we obey Him in our diet, modest apparel, sober-mindedness? Will we humble ourselves and conform to all that He commands? As we learn the ways of righteousness, we discard the paganism that we loved so much. Will we endure the conversion process?

Matthew 18:1-4 At the same time came the disciples unto Yahshua, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Yahshua called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Conversion is turning around; instead of running away from our Creator, we turn around and begin running to Him. We turn from the selfish, self-centered life of the flesh to a new life altogether. It is His power moving upon our willing spirit: that is divine will power. We must be willing to give up our fortunes, our possessions, our high polished intellect, our pride, and follow Him; that is what it means to believe in Him. We must believe His words. Do we believe Him when He says we'll not even enter His kingdom unless we are born from above? He said the lack of this experience would keep us *out* of His Paradise kingdom. What else did He say would keep people out of His kingdom?

Mark 10:15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of Elohim as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

A little child is a humble soul. So very many are too proud to receive the kingdom as a little child; too puffed up in their own self-esteem to recognize the sinful condition of their own soul and their need of a Saviour; too proud to be born again. By the way, a child is someone who has been born. What else will keep people out of the kingdom?

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Do we believe the inspired Word that says if we are unwilling to endure much tribulation we'll not enter the kingdom of Elohim? Surely no one would argue that we'll endure tribulation *after* we have entered the kingdom; we must endure it now in this life, just as we must be born again now, in this life. Let us take note of the solemn warning of Revelation 21:27:

And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Just as Yahshua said that no one shall enter His kingdom unless they are born again, so in like manner, no one shall enter His kingdom unless they are cleansed from all unrighteousness: all defilement.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Only those who are obedient to His commandments will be able to enter His kingdom; indeed, they are the only ones who have a right to enter. It would be pure folly to argue that we'll begin obeying once we die and are resurrected into His kingdom. Then it will be too late. Now is the day of salvation. A partial obedience to some of His commandments will never do. While it will be impossible for those mentioned above to enter, for those who at least have a hope of entering, some will have a harder time than others.

Matthew 19:23, 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

We'll address the rich man more in detail in chapter nine, but let us clarify something needful at this juncture. Yahshua is not referring in this passage to a small opening in the wall; He is referring to a sewing needle. Of course a camel cannot go through the eye of a sewing needle. It was merely allegoric in ancient times for something too hard to accomplish. Here is the word for needle: G4476 ῥαφίς *rhapsis hraf-ece'* From ῥάπτω *rhaptō*, a primary word, (to *sew*; through the idea of *puncturing*); a *needle*: - needle.

The problem is not in the Greek word needle, but in the Hebrew word for camel: H1581 גמל *gāmāl gaw-mawl'* camel. The etymology of this word has to do with the camel's tail

looking like an unraveling rope. In the Aramaic Peshitta for the above passage, it says that it is easier for a rope to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Elohim. It would be very difficult for anyone to unravel a rope and pull each strand through the eye of a sewing needle strand by strand but not impossible. How many are willing to do it? Do we believe the Messiah's words? The disciples found it hard to believe what Yahshua said.

Matthew 19:25-6 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Yahshua beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with יהוה all things are possible.

1st Peter 4:18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

Many have underestimated the great value of the gift of eternal life. All who are reading this page right now are obviously alive. Even when we are in dire straits, and are suffering under some form of persecution or abuse, still we value life enough to endure another day. Imagine receiving a gift card entitling you to live in perfect health and an abundance of wealth for the next 240 years on a beautiful tropical island, with a yacht to travel whenever and wherever you wanted to go? Who would turn such a gift away? Now go out on the beach of your island and scoop up a cup of sand. Each grain of sand represents that 240 years. Do you know how many grains of sand there are in a cup? There are 7.5 million grains of sand in a cup. Can you imagine how many *truckloads* of sand there are in just a mile of an ocean beach? Now imagine all the beaches on the earth, and how many 240 year grains of sand there must be! Each one represents another 240 years added to your life. And when you have used up all those years of life in a state of perfect youthful health, eternity has hardly yet begun. Have you had enough time to do all you would like to do? For the present, life rushes by like an evening breeze. *We need eternity don't you agree.* It would be the height of folly to forfeit such an opportunity!

Why will the righteous scarcely be saved? Because it requires faith to believe in someone the chosen people have rejected for 2,000 years. Such rejection cost them everything. In spite of all the prophecies of the Tanakh (Old Testament) that Yahshua the Messiah fulfilled, they persist in that rejection still. Many others who believe in Him somehow refuse to obey Him. They have manufactured a religion purporting to crown Him as Lord of their life, but turn away from His Torah. Ironically there are others who believe in Him, obey Him, and yet have somehow turned away from the spiritual birth here and now. We must find our way through the puzzling maze.

Yahshua said the kingdom of יהוה is within the heart and soul of the righteous (Luke 17:21). There is a literal Paradise kingdom that He promised the thief he would one day enter, but the kingdom begins within us. The children of Israel were promised a land flowing with milk and honey. They eagerly went forth to take up residence within it. The only part they were not told about was the giants already living there, enjoying the milk and honey for themselves: it was occupied, not by a scattered few nomadic shepherds easily driven out, but rather by warlike giants twelve feet tall like Goliath. Why didn't יהוה tell them of the skilled gigantic warriors in the Promised Land? Had He told them, He knew they would never have left Egypt. Rather than show them the negative, He showed them the positive: His mighty power to vanquish every enemy however large. Note Deuteronomy 20:1-4:

If you have to go to war, you may find yourselves facing an enemy army that is bigger than yours and that has horses and chariots. But don't be afraid! יהוה your God rescued you from Egypt, and he will help you fight. Before you march into battle, a priest will go to the front of the army and say, "Soldiers of Israel, listen to me! Today when you go into battle, don't be afraid of the enemy, and when you see them, don't panic. יהוה your Elohim will fight alongside you and help you win the battle." (CEV).

The words, don't panic, is *fear not* in the KJV, and it appears 144 times throughout the Tanakh. The Greek word for fear is phobos: phobia. Israel fought for a physical Promised Land in days of old but we are now engaged in a spiritual conflict for a spiritual kingdom. We must,

by the same mighty power of יהוה overcome giants of sinful inclinations that were thrust upon us from childhood. We must take the kingdom of our soul with a spiritual violence (Matthew 11:12).

Deuteronomy 31:8 יהוה will lead you into the land. He will always be with you and help you, so don't ever be afraid of your enemies. (CEV).

Deuteronomy 31:23 And he commanded Joshua the son of Nun, and said: Be strong and of a good courage. For you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you. (MKJV).

Deuteronomy 33:4, 27 Moses commanded us a law, *even* the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. The eternal Elohyim *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy *them*.

For the time being, the inheritance of the righteous is the Torah given us by the Almighty. He is finding out through the test of the Torah right now who shall be worthy of His Paradise kingdom. He is our refuge; He is the one who will thrust out our gigantic enemies of doubt, fear, anger, lust, impatience, double-mindedness, foolishness and unbelief. We must crowd out the enemy by filling the space they now occupy with the Word of יהוה. This is the secret of the righteous to overcoming every enemy of the soul however large; the battlefield is the mind.

Psalm 119:11 Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Yahshua vanquished the enemy in the wilderness of temptation by the Word that He had hidden in His heart. It is by that same Word that we shall overcome every sinful inclination. If we fail to study the written Word, we shall fail to conquer the spiritual foes within and without. Just as Israel of old would have no peace within their borders until they had driven out the enemy, so shall there be no peace within the kingdom of the soul until we have vanquished every foe through the mighty power of יהוה Elohyim. There is a place for righteous spiritual violence. Let us not withdraw from the fray.

Concept Seven

Earnest of the Spirit

2nd Corinthians 1:21-22 And so יהוה makes it possible for you and us to stand firmly together with Messiah. יהוה is also the one who chose us and put his Spirit in our hearts to show that we belong only to him. (CEV)

2nd Corinthians 1:22 ...who has placed his mark of ownership upon us, and who has given us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the guarantee of all that he has in store for us. (GNB).

2nd Corinthians 1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Some have entertained the thought that the earnest of the Spirit constitutes a “down payment,” of the future reward when we’ll “finally” be born again. Does our Creator owe us eternal life? Has He given us a down payment of what He owes us? We need to examine this word *earnest* much more closely than the English word conveys. The word in the Greek is a direct transliteration of the Hebrew. “...and given the earnest of the Spirit” - Τον αρραβωνα του Πνευματος. *Ton arrabona ton pneumatos*. From this unction and sealing in the above passage, we have a clear testimony in our own souls, the Divine Spirit dwelling constantly within us, of our acceptance with יהוה, that our ways are pleasing to Him. The αρραβων arrabon of the apostle is the same as the ערבון erabon of Moshe in Genesis 38:17-20, which is translated there as *pledge*. The word properly signifies an earnest of something promised. From the use of the term in Genesis, which Rav Shaul puts here in Greek letters, we may at once see his meaning above, and in Eph 1:14; the Holy Spirit being an earnest in the heart. And an earnest of the promised inheritance means a security given in hand for the fulfillment of all יהוה’s promises. We may learn from this that eternal life will be given in that great day to all who can produce the arrabon pledge. He who is found then with the earnest of יהוה’s Spirit in his heart, shall not only be saved from eternal death, but have that eternal life of which it is the pledge, the earnest, and the evidence. Without this arrabon there can be no redemption. It is not a partial payment; we may have the fullness of the Spirit just as Yahshua had here on earth.

Ephesians 1:13, 14 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of יהוה, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

In light of this concept of the arrabon, it behooves us to reconsider the deep importance of what is set before us in the Scriptures. We must be able to produce this arrabon pledge that Yahshua left with us until He returns. But how can we be sure that we actually are in possession of this mysterious arrabon? Is speaking in unknown tongues the evidence? Are any of the gifts the evidence? Didn’t Yahshua say, “*By their fruits you shall know them*”? When we consider the fruits of the Holy Spirit, can we imagine anyone in the coming kingdom who is lacking even one of these fruits? We read that nothing that in any wise defileth shall enter the kingdom of Elohim (Revelation 21:27). When we are delivered of defiling spirits, the vacuum is filled with the Holy Spirit. Unkindness is replaced with love; depression and anger with joy; unrest is filled with peace; frustration with patience; aggressiveness with gentleness; immorality and foolishness with holiness; pride and arrogance with meekness; self-indulgence with temperance; worry, fear, panic and anxiety with quiet faith; and cowardice with courage. These good traits of character constitute the evidence of the arrabon, and the passport to the Paradise kingdom.

Some have thought that we cannot have the fullness of the Holy Spirit in this present life, that such a blessing is part of the future reward. But is this the truth? They teach that even Yahshua was not born of the Spirit (spiritually born), and therefore had only a “down payment” of the Holy Spirit in *His* earthly sojourn. But is that the truth? Did He have only a little portion of the Holy Spirit? Note John 3:34:

For he whom יהוה hath sent speaketh the words of Elohyim: for יהוה giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

For he whom יהוה hath sent speaketh the word of יהוה, which He was sent to speak, and enabled to speak; for יהוה giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The prophets were as messengers that brought letters from heaven; but Messiah came under the character of an *ambassador*, for He spoke the *words of Elohyim*, and nothing he said intimated human infirmity; both substance and language were divine. He spoke as no other prophet did. None can speak the *words of Elohyim* without the *Spirit of Elohyim*.

2nd Kings 2:9, 10 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

The Spirit was not in Yahshua as in a vessel, but as in a fountain, as in a bottomless ocean. He is Master of all. Angels are His servants; devils are His captives. He has power over all flesh. The kingdom of heaven is committed to His rulership. He has power to govern His body of believers as the great Lawgiver, and to call everyone to give account as the great Judge.

True believers, even now, *have* everlasting life; not only shall they have it hereafter but they have it now. They have very good security for it. The deed by which it has been purchased is sealed and delivered to them, and so they *have* it; it is put into the hands of their Guardian for them and so they have it here and now. They have the Son of Elohyim, and in Him *they have life, so long as they stay connected to Him*; they have the Spirit of Elohyim, the *earnest* of the pledge to eternal life. Grace is glory begun.

In Romans chapters six, seven and eight, we have the outlay of the three stages or steps to the spiritual birth: the begettal (conception); the gestational period (conversion); and delivery. Romans seven is a graphic portrayal of the begotten man struggling out of his carnal cocoon. In the end he cries out, “*Who shall deliver me?*” (Romans 7:24). This is the language of birth.

Evil people give good gifts to their children—how much more is the Father willing to give the Ruakh Haqadosh to those who ask? He is willing to give us the same fullness of the Spirit here and now as He gave to Yahshua as a man who walked the earth so long ago.

Many sincere people in this present day mistakenly reject the spiritual birth because of a misunderstanding of Paul’s doctrine on the Earnest of the Spirit. The word *arbon* in Hebrew signifies an exchange. Since it is the Holy Spirit that constitutes the exchange, we must search for some Scriptural evidence wherein the Ruakh was given as the exchange for something else of equal value. Let us see if we can find this divine transaction.

John 16:7 Let me assure you, it is better for you that I go away. I say this because when I go away I will send the Helper to you. But if I did not go, the Helper would not come. (ERV).

The world was blessed beyond measure by the physical presence of Yahshua. But, as we know, He could be in only one place at one time. The greatest possible exchange He could have made was in giving of the Holy Spirit, who could be in all places at all times...just like the wind, as it is with all who are born again.

The earnest for that reason is not a supposed “down payment,” but rather the “Divine Presence” of the Ruakh Haqadosh. Yahshua did not leave us as orphans in a hostile world. Just as He came to represent the Father, the Ruakh has come to represent Him. Yahshua was the evidence of the Father’s love for us, and the Holy Spirit is the evidence that Yahshua will return for us. Just as He was born into this world by the power of the Ruakh, so must we be born from above by that same Spirit. Just as He was like the Wind (John 8:14), so are all who have been born again: undiscernible by the carnal mind. What we need then are definitions for earnest and down-payment. From the Webster’s 1828 edition for *Earnest*,

Earnest: 1. First fruits; that which is in advance, and gives promise of something to come. Early fruit may be an earnest of fruit to follow. The first success in arms may be an earnest of future success. The christian's peace of mind in this life is an earnest of future peace and happiness. Hence earnest or earnest-money is a first payment or deposit giving promise or assurance of full payment. Hence the practice of giving an earnest to ratify a bargain. This sense of the word is primary, denoting that which goes before, or in advance. Thus the earnest of the spirit is given to saints, as a pledge or assurance of their future enjoyment of God's presence and favor.

Pledge: 2. To give as a warrant or security; as, to pledge one's word or honor; to pledge one's veracity.

The Yellow Bandana

He gave Rosanna his yellow bandana to wear in her hair
'til he's with her once more;
He gave Rosanna his yellow bandana
then he mounted his pony and rode off to war.

The yellow bandana was his solemn pledge to her that he would return for her after the war; it was a bond between them, a token of their mutual love for one another. It was not a down payment of anything; it was his earnest or pledge to her that he would keep his promise.

Down payment - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: **Down payment** is a **payment** used in the context of the purchase of expensive items such as a car and a house, whereby the **payment** is the initial upfront portion of the total amount due and it is usually given in cash at the time of finalizing the transaction.

John 16:7 But I tell you that I am going to do what is best for you. That is why I am going away. The Holy Spirit cannot come to help you until I leave. But after I am gone, I will send the Spirit to you.

How could it be to our advantage the absence of Yahshua? The disciples were in the presence of Yahshua for 3 ½ years; they were in constant discord over who would be the greatest in what they thought was to be an earthly temporal kingdom. It was not until the day of Shavuot when they were filled with the Holy Spirit that they were empowered to do greater works than even Yahshua had done. They finally had the power over the fallen nature; they were finally converted and were able to feed the sheep. (Luke 22:32).

They were finally able to discern spiritual things. They all forsook Him at Passover, and they all proclaimed Him at Shavuot just seven weeks later. Something happened at Shavuot. Yahshua took them through the conversion throughout His brief ministry, but only the Ruakh Haqadosh could give them birth, and without the spiritual birth they did not have the earnest of the Spirit. *The earnest of the Spirit is veritably the spiritual birth.* Shavuot (Pentecost) was a confirmation of the difficult birth the apostles had gone through at the cross; the cross is the beginning and the end of the spiritual birth. The cross is the solitary bridge to carry us across the deep chasm from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, and when we cross over that bridge, we are at that point born from above.

The adversary is in the business of spiritual abortion. He has aborted the spiritual birth of Christendom by convincing them they can be spiritually born while living in rebellion to Divine Law. He has aborted the spiritual birth of Judaism through their rejection of the Hebrew Messiah; and he has robbed it from the Messianics by convincing them that the earnest of the Spirit is just a preliminary to when they'll "finally" be born again in the coming kingdom. Yahshua said no one will even see the kingdom who has not been born from above. To believe Yahshua's words will not keep anyone out of the kingdom; to disbelieve Him will certainly keep a person out of the kingdom. *To believe, or not to believe: that is the question.*

It is not a question that should be unfamiliar to us. Though only upon rare occasions in the Tanakh, we find even there the spiritual birth in the lives of certain individuals. The object of the spiritual birth is to fit us for the majestic kingdom: to transform us from the mundane to the heavenly. It is a complete transformation of the character. Saul was a common farmer who was to become the first king of Israel. He was shy and introverted, and to all human appearance, was perhaps the wrong choice. But after he was anointed by the prophet Samuel, a revolution began to permeate his life. A revolution is a radical change. Like Saul, we also are called into the role of majesty: a kingdom of priests, a priestly kingdom. Even though it was Samuel who poured the anointing oil upon Saul, he verily stated that it was יהוה who anointed him (1st Samuel 10:1). And so it is with all who are called to the spiritual birth.

1st Samuel 10:6 And the Spirit of יהוה will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

2nd Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Let us protest Satan's abortion clinic and vote Pro-Life: Pro-eternal life. If we are born only once (the natural, carnal birth) then we'll die twice, the first and second deaths; if we are born twice (the natural and the spiritual) then we'll die only once: the natural death. The more we turn away from sin the easier it becomes, until we finally die to sin altogether. The spiritual life is easy after we have died. We must make it through the spiritual labyrinth in order to reach the goal of the spiritual birth. We must not fall prey to the deception of a feigned spiritual birth through the popular notion that we have been born again while continuing to live a life of sin on the one hand; and we must guard ourselves against the deception of thinking that since we cannot live above sin in this life, we'll be born again in the coming kingdom. This is a fatal deception.

In Ephesians 1:13, 14, it says that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit...which is the earnest of our inheritance. The sealing of the Spirit and the pledge of the inheritance cannot be separated—they are always together and are indeed, one and the same. Those who are sealed have the earnest pledge of the indwelling Spirit and they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. He takes them to the reward. They are His purchased possession. The Messiah left us, but He left us under the charge of the Ruakh Haqadosh, not only to comfort and guide us, but also as the earnest pledge that He will return for His spiritual bride. The Ruakh will bring Yahshua's Bride to maturity. He is not returning for an unborn embryo or fetus; He is returning for a glorious, fully developed bride who has made herself ready for her Paradise wedding. (Rev 19:1-7). When the fetus is in the mother's womb it is nourished and breathes through the umbilical cord. During this gestational period, as the fetus swims around in its own private little ocean like a fish, because its urination mixes in with the amniotic fluid, of necessity, that liquid enters the mouth of the fetus, as is the case with all creatures who dwell in the water. But in Revelation 14:5 it says that the Bride who is sealed by the earnest of the Spirit, "*has no guile found in her mouth.*" She is not an unborn fetus, nor will she be born again in the kingdom. The Bride that our Saviour is coming back for is elegant, fully developed, majestic and beautiful. Many who have been begotten have been brought to the birth but cannot be delivered; they refuse to be.

Isaiah 66:9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith יהוה: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut *the womb*? saith thy Elohyim.

It is not until we have experienced *victory* over the fallen nature that the death to self is revealed, and the spiritual birth can then occur. But let us not forget: that is only the point of birth; from that point we begin to grow in the Spirit. Do righteous, spiritually born people sin? They choose not and therefore cannot *continue to live a life* of sin. The gospel would be a sham if such were not the case. The gospel empowers us to live the life of an overcomer. Do they make mistakes that the world may interpret as sin? It is upon this question that many mistakenly disparage the spiritual birth. Like the pretended friends of Job, they place a wrong interpretation

on the adverse conditions surrounding the righteous. However, let us note the following passage of Proverbs 24:16 from three different versions.

(Brenton) For a righteous man will fall seven times, and rise again: but the ungodly shall be without strength in troubles.

(CEV) Even if good people fall seven times, they will get back up. But when trouble strikes the wicked, that's the end of them.

(ERV) Good people might fall again and again, but they always get up. It is the wicked who are defeated by their troubles.

The accuser of the brethren is none other than Hasatan. He tried incessantly to denigrate Yahshua as an evil doer, but to no avail. He worked through the religious leaders to make Him appear as a sinner. For those who escape the abortion clinic of the devil, we may rest assured that they'll be slandered and libeled: they'll hear words they never read in the Bible. When Yahshua and His disciples walked through the corn field one Sabbath day, plucking ears of corn and eating them on the way to the synagogue, the religious leaders tried to accuse them of breaking the Sabbath (harvesting their crops), but they weren't. Some religious leaders in this present day have even accused them of stealing the corn! If they would only read the Scriptures they would know that Yahshua and His disciples were guilty of neither accusation (See Leviticus 23:22). The devil is in the business of trying to make the righteous look sinful. Yahshua asked in John 8:46, *"Can any of you prove that I am guilty of sin? If I tell the truth, why don't you believe me?"*

Revelation 12:10-12 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our Elohyim, and the power of his Messiah: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our Elohyim day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. 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.

We must remember that temptation is not sin. Some misguided souls have joined the accuser by asking the righteous if an unclean thought ever crosses their mind. We must be as wise as a serpent to discern the trap they are laying for us. The world is searching diligently for the slightest hope of proving that there is not a righteous soul on the earth. If there are people who have gained the conquest over sin, then the idea that such a thing is impossible is disproven. *Temptation is not sin.* We must not accept the temptations of the devil as being in harmony with our own mind as though evil thoughts are proceeding from our own sanctified soul. We must vanquish the enemy on every front: without and within. Here are two secrets to overcoming this wily foe; the first one from 2nd Corinthians 10:5:

2nd Corinthians 10:5 And we demolish imaginations, and every lofty thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Elohyim, and subjugate all reasonings to obedience to the Messiah. (Murdock).

2nd Corinthians 10:4, 5 The weapons we use in our fight are not made by humans. Rather, they are powerful weapons from Elohyim. With them we destroy people's defenses, that is, their arguments and all their intellectual arrogance that oppose the knowledge of Elohyim. We take every thought captive so that it is obedient to the Messiah. (GW).

Commit these two verses to memory and whenever evil thoughts try to invade the inner sanctum of your mind, quote these verses—they are the mighty weapons of our warfare. In fact, committing Scripture to memory is perhaps the most powerful thing you can do: it is the Sword of the Spirit.

Concept Eight

The Promised Inheritance

The children of Israel were promised a land that flowed with milk and honey; a land of pomegranates, date palms, grapes and citrus trees. They were so eager to make the two or three week trek across the Arabian wilderness, cross over into Midian and meet with יהוה at Mt. Sinai, then head northward about 50 miles, turn westward and cross over the Jordan and enter that Promised Land! Just before they entered, Moshe sent twelve spies to search out the land to see what was involved before crossing over. They traversed the land for 40 days then returned to the encampment. What a message they had to bear! The grapes were so large two men had to bear a cluster of them on a pole resting on their shoulders. These two men were probably Caleb and Yahoshua. The nation of Israel cheered them as they entered back into the encampment. But the joyful mood was about to change as the clouds of doubt were soon to gather. Ten of the spies brought back a negative report based on fear. They assumed the liberty of speaking first thus creating an alarm and a panic amongst the people. By the time Yahoshua and Caleb spoke the damage had already been done; there was nothing they could do now to quell the tide of woeful sentiment against יהוה's promise, and His faithful servants Moshe and Brother Aaron. Everything else was in place: the blessings were there...but there were the giants, the descendants of the Anakim, just begging them to cross over that Jordan River if they dare. By the way, the Jordan always floods in the springtime. How would three million people even get across that swollen river? Troubles upon troubles. They acted like no miracles had ever happened before.

1st Corinthians 10:11 Now these things were done as an example; and were put down in writing for our teaching, on whom the last days have come. (BBE)

The things that happened to those people are examples. They were written to be warnings for us. We live in the time that all those past histories were pointing to. (ERV)

How could their experience relate to us down at the end of the age? Upon one thing we can all agree. Each of those 12 men was inspired by the spirit that was within him: either the spirit of fear, or the spirit of courage. As mentioned earlier, when the prophet Eliyah was about to depart out of this world, his protégé younger prophet Elisha made a request of him, that he could receive a double portion of the spirit that was in the soul of the foremost prophet. Eliyah said it was a hard thing that he was asking, but his request would be granted if he met the requirements (2nd Kings 2:9, 10). The other prophets of the day were trying to discourage Elisha (2nd Kings, Ch. 2) and had he listened to them he would have forfeited to himself the tremendous blessing that awaited him. In essence, the negative prophets said, *“You can't have a double portion of the Spirit.”* Today we are told, *“No one can have the fullness of the Holy Spirit in this life; we can only have a little down-payment.”*

These events were recorded for our instruction, those of us living down at the close of history. We are now on the verge of entering the Promised Land that יהוה promised to give unto Abraham and his descendants; but there are voices perhaps unbeknownst to themselves, whose effect nonetheless, is to prevent us from entering the heavenly Canaan Land. Eliyah was a type of the righteous living who will be taken to Paradise at the return of our Master Yahshua. He had the arrabon pledge of the Ruakh HaQadosh, and he conferred upon Elisha who struggled to meet the requirements, a double portion of the Holy Spirit that was upon him. In order to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must be emptied of our own spirits of doubt and fear.

The men of fear in the time of Moshe, in essence said, “Yes, the land is beautiful indeed, producing this large fruit that you see. However, so are there giant *people* already occupying the so-called ‘Promised Land’ of which our leader Moshe said nothing about. They are the children of the Anakim; and as we are all aware, the Hebrew word *anak* of course, means *to strangle*. We may as well just head back to Goshen.” Because of their spirit of fear and doubt, that whole generation were not able to enter the Promised Land. So now, voices are crying out, *“We cannot achieve the spiritual birth—we are still slaves to sin.”* Such a message will cause many to miss the Promised Land of the Paradise kingdom.

In like manner, there is much talk today about Aliyah: going up to possess the land—the physical land of Israel. Eliyah, like Enoch before him, was taken up from the physical land of Israel and went in a chariot of fire to the Paradise kingdom. Though he stood firm throughout his life against the 850 prophets and priests of Baal, he had a temporary fear of Jezebel, but he was purified on the mountain, the very same mountain wherein Moshe met with Almighty יהוה, and later received the Ten Commandment Law and the Torah. It is the Spirit of the Torah of יהוה we must remember, that converts and purifies the soul (Psalm 19:7). As we are emptied of every unclean spirit, we may then be filled with the Holy Spirit of יהוה and receive the earnest pledge that when the Messiah returns, we'll be ready to meet Him. We will have purified our souls from all defilement by the power of the indwelling Spirit; *this is the earnest of the Spirit.*

1st Peter 1:22, 23 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of יהוה, which liveth and abideth for ever.

So now we know: we are born again by the Word of יהוה. It is the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures that Divine Truth is made the instrument of quickening the soul into spiritual life. We may by this deduce that the reason so few have received this spiritual birth is because so few are studying the Word. The Scriptures of Truth (Daniel 10:21), reveal a multitude of righteous human beings (many of them in Hebrews chapter eleven), but the word of man cries, *“There’s not a breathing soul on earth who doesn’t commit sin; no one is perfect, everybody sins.”* It is not only people of the world who utter this dismal statement; it is also the religious person; but they do so in open contradiction to the Scriptures. It is nothing less than the discouraging report of the fearful spies: *“The Anakim Giants of Lust, Foolish Talking, Anger and Doubt, Fear and Unbelief have a stranglehold around our necks, and they’re just too big to conquer!”*

We need to start listening to those valiant men Yahoshua and Caleb. We need to consider how it was a man named *Yahoshua* who led them into the Promised Land: he was the type of our Messiah Yahshua who wants to lead us into the Paradise Land. He gave the solemn message to Nicodemus on that fateful night, not for his benefit alone, but for all who would read the account. It was a message of hope to us all. We can conquer the enemy. Listen to Yahoshua of old: *“We have found the Word of יהוה to be true. Everything about the Land is just as He has said. Moreover, there are even giant warlords who are presently occupying the land that our Almighty יהוה has promised to conquer and destroy ahead of us. Just as He destroyed the mighty host of the Egyptians behind us in the Red Sea that He opened before us, so shall He do for us now. We have nothing to fear for the future except that we should forget the way He has led us out of Egypt to this present moment. All we have to do is show up and He will do the rest. Let us march forward and possess the Land!”*

The present-day counterpart is deeper than meets the eye: it was only Yahoshua and Caleb who were able to enter the Promised Land with their families because they believed in and acted upon the Word of יהוה! The faint-hearted spies not only forfeited their own opportunity to gain another wonderful experience in trusting their mighty King, but they failed to lead their families in that experience as well. They all perished in the wilderness...along with about three million others who listened to them. We'd better be careful who we listen to.

The parallel is profound; here we are at this time facing the same paramount state of affairs wherein many are portraying the ten fearful spies and but a few representing Yahoshua and Caleb. The ten cowardly spies of today have much to lose like the ten spies of the past.

To be born again is to die to this world of sin, be cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, and be resurrected into a new life altogether: a new creation. That is what we must pray for. We are born into His spiritual kingdom that is unobservable to the carnal mind. It is an invisible birth into an invisible kingdom; but invisibility does not mean impossibility. Just as the wind is invisible but no less real, so it is with the spiritual birth. We must be born again...right here and right now, or we'll never enter the Land that is fairer than day.

Numbers 14:7-9 And they (Caleb and Yahoshua) spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, *is* an exceeding good land. If יהוה delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against יהוה, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and יהוה *is* with us: fear them not.

These two warriors Caleb and Yahoshua like David of old, weren't fearful to go after the giants of the land knowing that the battle belongs to יהוה. These "giants" were nothing more than the little emissaries of the devil: mere stubble before the fiery presence of יהוה. In like manner we must be willing to battle our fallen nature of sin, the world, and the enemy of our soul, which comes to kill, steal and destroy. But the battle belongs to יהוה. We can overcome through Him.

In the above passage of Numbers 14:9, it states a very interesting point: "their defence is departed from them." In Colossians 2:15 it says, "*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*" This verse when explored more deeply is in alignment with Caleb's words, "*their defence is departed from them*," referring to the kingdom of darkness. Let us do a little word study here: Spoiled -G554 ἀπεκδύομαι *ap-ek-doo'-om-ahee* strip; Principalities - G746 ἀρχή *archē ar-khay'* a magistrate; and Powers - G1849 ἐξουσία *exousia ex-oo-see'-ah* authority, jurisdiction.

So, in essence this verse is stating: Yahshua overthrew the powers of darkness and stripped them of their authority and their weaponry. By His death on the cross, he stripped from the principalities and powers of darkness both their robe of office and authority as princes of this world, and their armor of strength in their warfare against the Kingdom of Light. HalleluYah for this awesome conquest over the kingdom of darkness!

Numbers 14:20-24 And יהוה said, I have pardoned according to thy word: But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of יהוה. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

Here in verse 24 it says of Caleb that he had "*another spirit with him and hath followed me fully*." Brother Caleb was not of a fearing and defeated spirit. By the same token, so are we well able to overcome every defect of character, no matter how large, if only we'll march ahead in the same spirit of victory.

Numbers 13:30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

His confidence was in the power of the Almighty. He conquered our enemies behind us, and He is well able to conquer our enemies ahead of us...if only we'll trust in Him. We can overcome. Take note of these passages in Revelation that speak about being overcomers; here are just a couple:

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne...

Revelation 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his Elohyim, and he shall be my son...

The spiritual birth is all about becoming an overcomer here and now that we may have the right to enter the Paradise Kingdom one day very soon.

Concept Nine

The Free Gift?

Romans 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

The Pauline doctrine of *the free gift* has brought much confusion into the matter of salvation. It has had the effect of depreciating the value of the *reward* (“*Great is your reward in heaven*” Matthew 5:12), and lowering the requirements of it. Yahshua used this noble word *reward*, 16 times in reference to the just compensation of the righteous...as well as the wicked: (“*They have their reward*” Matthew 6:2). Even the repentant thief on the cross understood the principle of punishment and reward. Take note of his honest sense of justice:

Luke 23:40, 41 The other one, however, rebuked him, saying, "Don't you fear Elohyim? You received the same sentence he did. Ours, however, is only right, because we are getting what we deserve for what we did; but he has done no wrong. (GNB)

He acknowledged the justice of his reward, but he also declared the injustice of executing an innocent man. Of greater importance still, he recognized this innocent man to be the Messiah, the King of the Yahudim, and he asked Him to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Yahshua never once intimated that salvation is “a free gift.” Just as the wages of sin is death, so the reward of obedience is eternal life through Yahshua. However, obedience to יהוה's righteous laws, in the fullest scope of the word, is impossible; it is impossible without the spiritual birth. Only the spiritually righteous have the right to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

So we must ask, is salvation really free? When the rich young ruler came to Yahshua and inquired of Him what he must do in order to inherit eternal life (Matthew 19:16-22), the Master didn't tell him to only believe on Him, that it is a free gift. Reading the sincerity of the young man's heart, He instructed him to obey the Commandments. To this he openly confessed his faith in the Law, thinking that he was indeed, walking in harmony with the Law, not knowing his own selfish condition of soul. In order for the Rabbi to gently expose the malignancy, He further instructed him to forsake his luxuriant life of the wealthy, give his goods to the poor and come follow Him. To such a challenge, he went away sad, loving his possessions more than the poor, and the gentle Master standing at the door; the closed door of his penniless heart. He went away sorrowful (Matthew 19:22).

Was it the money that was his downfall? Shaul said it is the *love* of money that is a sin (1st Timothy 6:10). Yahshua said that it is *trusting* in the power of money that eclipses the love and trust that should be reserved for יהוה alone (Mark 10:24). He said the wealthy hardly shall be able to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:23).

There lies dormant within the heart and soul of every person on earth, seeds that do not spring forth until the right (or wrong) set of circumstances comes about. The poor are not impervious from a covetous heart. Though they may have only meager material goods by way of comparison to the wealthy, it is easy to idolize an antique car, or a boat or most anything else. They don't need a yacht or a Lamborghini. But nowhere is the love of the world more *manifest* than in the wealthy, as they possess the power to lavish upon themselves luxury and excess, often while the poor are left neglected right within their very presence as in the case of the rich man

and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Thank heaven for the few wealthy people in the world who have a heart of mercy upon the poor around them and do something to help them. Like the wealthy Abraham of days gone by, they are a blessing wherever they go. So it is not the possession of gold and silver that constitutes the sin, but rather the covetous spirit to hoard it all to oneself. It is יהוה who gives us power to gain wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18).

Forty-eight percent of the world's wealth is owned by only one percent of the world's population. The wealth of the one percent richest people in the world amounts to \$110 trillion. That's 65 times the total wealth of the bottom half of the world's population. The bottom half of the world's population owns the same as the richest 85 *people* in the world. That is a ratio of 85 to three and a half *billion* people. It is by exploiting the world's vast resources that most men become wealthy. Few people are aware of such an extreme imbalance of the earth's possessions, but these are the statistics. Money is only a paper symbol of material net worth of an individual. How many acres of land or bales of cotton does he possess? How did he obtain that land? Were the Native Americans driven off of it a century ago by the more powerful white man whose bigger guns were the deciding factor? Did it cost them their lives in their effort to defend their homeland? We are all here by divine providence; no one is more valuable than others. It is true that we need those minerals hidden in the earth, like oil and water and gold and silver, and it is a blessing that some, through their ingenuity and wealth can bring them forth, but to set a price so high that the poor get poorer while the rich get richer reveals a covetous spirit. And such a spirit leaves the soul of man (a worldly wealthy man) impoverished. Like the rich young ruler, and the rich man in the parable of Lazarus, they go away sorrowful; they cling to their little grain of sand when they could have all the sand of the world...if they would just let loose of that solitary grain. Life is a gift to us from the benevolent hand of a loving Father. Nearly every person is given his or her little grain of sand in the form of 70-80 years on the earth. If we obtain much material gain in this life and it puffs us up in pride and self-centeredness, all it will do is rob us of eternal life: a whole earth full of sand.

Revelation 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

The disciples, intently observing this exchange between their Master and the rich young ruler were "*exceedingly amazed*" at Yahshua's statement regarding the wealthy hardly able to enter the kingdom of heaven. The Torah (Deuteronomy 28:1-14) promises blessings upon the obedient! "*Aren't the wealthy receiving the blessings that are promised to the obedient?*" "*We thought riches were the revelation of יהוה's favor, and poverty His disfavor!*" Surely the Master must be mistaken this time! Surely something is amiss here. It must have seemed contradictory to their listening ears. Not until this incident did Peter voice his concern about rewards in the hereafter; he was probably acting as spokesman for the others.

Matthew 19:27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

In essence, he said, "*We have done what you commanded this man to do.*" Probably their all was rather small: a few fishing nets, some small boats and little cottages. But Yahshua didn't minimize the importance of their sacrifice. Nothing is more important to a man than his family, and some of them had even left family behind in their effort to follow Him. We can never compare one man's sacrifice to another's; "*for as thy days, so shall thy strength be.*" (Deuteronomy 33:25). Like the widow who cast into the temple treasury her last two mites (Mark 12:42), it was all she had, and it was all they had. Notice the Master's response:

Matthew 19:28 And Yahshua said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

What did He mean *in the regeneration*? Because of the context, most have concluded that He was referring to the earth made new (Revelation 21 & Isaiah 65:17-25). The parallel conclusion that many espouse is that the spiritual birth cannot come until the kingdom is set up on the earth made new. Punctuation did not come into the Scriptures until the 14th century AD. Let us read it with the punctuation removed:

“Ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory...”

We do not doubt for a moment that the phrase, “*in the regeneration*” can certainly apply to that time when the physical kingdom is established on the earth made new, when there will be literal thrones for them to reign upon. However, when Yahshua walked upon the earth, was He not at that time the King of the Yahudim? When Pilate asked Him under oath if He was indeed the King, He responded that He was (Mark 15:2). That Pilate understood His response to mean *Yes*, is revealed in verse nine when he acknowledged Him before the Hebrew Nation to be the King of the Yahudim. He even wrote it on a sign to the world in three languages and nailed it to the cross (Luke 23:38 & John 19:19-22). Pilate wasn’t mocking Yahshua: he feared Him.

John 12:12-16 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Yahshua was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of יהוה. And Yahshua, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Yahshua was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

Yahshua qualified His statement to Pilate by saying that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36), but that did not disqualify Him from being the true King of the Yahudim. He said His kingdom was in the heart of His followers, and was therefore not made manifest (Luke 17:20-1) to the carnal world...*like the wind*. The natural person can hear the sound of the wind and even see and feel the effects of it, but cannot see the wind itself. יהוה's kingdom is not revealed to the carnally-minded. It will ever be a mystery to them. So it is with all who are born into His kingdom. No less real than the invisible kingdom, are the invisible subjects of His kingdom. The world can see, hear, and feel the effects of our presence, but cannot discern our spiritual nature; it is foolishness unto them, just as their carnality is to us.

“*Ye which have followed me in the regeneration;*”--This word occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament, (Titus 3:5). It literally means a new birth, or being born again. When applied to man, it denotes the great change when the heart is renewed. This is its meaning clearly in Titus.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

G3824 παλιγγενεσία *pal-ing-ghen-es-ee'-ah* (spiritual) *rebirth*, *spiritual renovation*; specifically *Messianic restoration*: - regeneration.

Yahshua was glorified after He resurrected from the dead, but was He not glorified even before that incident?

Matthew 16:28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

It is doubtful that many people believe some of the disciples are still alive at the present time, awaiting the Messiah’s return and the setting up of His kingdom here on the earth, so let us consider what He probably meant by His statement. Reading from Matthew 17:1-3,

Matthew 17:1-3 And after six days Yahshua taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Eliyah talking with him.

This is similar language to His description in Revelation 1:16. Each of these three men acknowledged that they beheld His majesty. Not only was He the greatest Teacher ever to have sojourned upon the earth, He was the greatest King, though for a time in obscurity.

2Peter 1:16-18 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Master Yahshua the Messiah, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from יהוה the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

In addition to Yahshua's invisible spiritual kingdom in the hearts of His followers, there is yet another *visible* kingdom here on earth in the vast body of believers scattered throughout the earth. Daniel's prophecy concerning the final allotted time for the Jewish nation ended three and a half years after the crucifixion at the stoning of Stephen. (See Daniel 9:24). It was then that the gospel invitation was no longer focused on the Jews specifically, but went out to the Gentiles far and wide. All the disciples, with the exception of Judas, lived to see the amazing spread of the gospel and the established assemblies everywhere they went.

Acts 13:46, 47 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of יהוה should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Master commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

The Jewish nation is a demonstration of refusal to enter into the spiritual birth. Their eyes are closed to receiving the Hebrew Messiah, and in turn, the spiritual birth. Many in the Messianic Movement have in a similar manner, denounced everything that is taught in the Christian churches...including the spiritual birth. They say it is "*a Jesus doctrine.*" We who came out of the Gentile world, and crossed over into the Hebrew faith of Abraham must not forget that he was the father of the faithful, and his son Isaac was declared to be born of the Spirit (Galatians 4:29).

Galatians 3:13, 14 Messiah hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Yahshua the Messiah; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

It was always and only the Messiah Yahshua who makes the way of escape possible. The Law pronounces a curse upon all who refuse to obey it, as well as on all who reject the Messiah. If we have escaped the snare of Judaism, and believe in the Torah observant Messiah, let us not fall into the snare of rejecting the spiritual birth.

Concept Ten

Saved by Grace

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of יהוה*:

Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Initially, the Messiah saves us from the consequence of sin, which is death, eternal death...by His own sacrificial death in our place. According to 1st John 1:9, we find that we must confess our sins in order to avail ourselves of his gift of forgiveness and salvation. Heaven's provision of salvation will profit us nothing at all if we think we can live contrary to the will of יהוה that is plainly expressed in His Word, and refuse to humble ourselves and confess that we have really been outright sinners all along, and stand in need of His help. Confession brings repentance from our sins which means we are sorry for them, and we stop doing them, and make things right that we have done wrong...to others and to our Creator. If we deserve a whipping, we take it like a man, and move on...forgetting all the ways of sin we had learned in the past, and begin learning the ways of righteousness. When we have done all that יהוה requires of us, we declare our allegiance to Him publicly by baptism which signifies that our sins have been washed away, and we are finally saved from sin and the sinful nature. We are born again.

If it is sin that separates us from Him, then repentance from sin, and turning toward righteousness will restore our relationship to Him. We must incline our ear to hearing His Law, and then He will incline His ear to hearing our prayers (Proverbs 28:9). His plan of salvation is to remove from us *the inclination* to sin. He will give us an inclination to righteousness. Such is the purpose of His grace. It is a mysterious, divine action that He works within our soul. Grace without Law isn't grace, it is disgrace.

We must work out what יהוה works in to us. While He works purity within, we work out of our soul impurity. But we must study His Book of Rules to know what He wants to work into us. That is the true plan of salvation. Does it seem too easy to believe? Can we actually be rid of this malignant, rebellious element of human nature by merely the study of the Word coupled with the grace He imparts, enabling us to obey all that He commands? Yes indeed! We need no longer be slaves to the destructive sinful nature and the disgrace it brings.

Sin separates us from יהוה while we are alive, and will result in eternal death when we are dead—not eternally alive in an unending lake of hellfire. If we believe the devil's lie that sinners don't die, then we'll also believe his lie that sinners can be saved in sin, that when the Father looks at us He doesn't really see us, but rather sees the blood of His only begotten Son. Such a doctrine takes away the fact of accountability on our part.

There is nothing mystical about this. And it is all within the power of our own choice to obtain salvation from sin. That is exactly what the whole issue is about. And if we think we shall have eternal life apart from this salvation from sin, we are only fooling ourselves. As we were born with a nature to sin, we must be born again. Though we may have thought that all we had to do was "believe in the Lord," we have seen that more is required of us than that. We must identify the Lord יהוה and learn His ways, and enter into His covenant with Him wherein He will save us from our enemy of sin and its wages of death, by the blood of the Lamb, and our own cooperation with the Almighty in a life of obedience to His commands.

As we can plainly see, sin is rebellion against יהוה's Law. When we violate His Law we have two issues to face: A), the penalty for this violation; and B), the presence of the rebellious spirit within us that prompts us into this transgression time and time again. The Messiah, in His great sacrifice, paid the debt for our penalty, but is He able to actually remove from our heart and mind the very element of rebellion? We need to first understand how He was able to save us from the consequences of sin. We need to understand that the consequences of sin (the violation of יהוה's Law), is death, eternal death, with no hope of eternal life at all (Romans 6:23). But He saved us from this dreadful plight by His sacrificial death. This ransom payment was prophesied throughout the Scriptures in both type and prophetic utterance. He the innocent bore the penalty of the guilty.

Those that have been long accustomed to sin have shaken off the restraint of fear and shame; their conscience is seared; the habits of sin are confirmed; and it is just with יהוה to give those up to their own hearts' lusts that have long refused to give themselves up to His grace. Sin is natural to us; we were shapen in it, so that we cannot get clear of it by any power of our own. But there is an Almighty grace that is able to change the sinner's heart, and that grace shall not be lacking to those who in a sense of their need of it seek it earnestly and faithfully.

By this we see that sin is a negative way of life that is learned. It is something that has been taught, and is therefore practiced every day by those who desire it. By the same token, righteousness is learned as well. When we consider the extremely high price that was paid for our redemption; that in itself is the very first step in the cure for the rebellious nature hidden deep within each of us from the moment of our birth. But in order for the cure to become effective, *we must learn* the ways of righteousness. And how do we learn these ways?

Psalm 119:9-11 **Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed [thereto] according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.**

What then does it mean to be a sinner?

We see by the Scriptural definition that a sinner is one who violates Divine principles, trespasses on the rights of others, and therefore stands guilty as the offender he is. Sometimes he is led astray, and misses the mark of the goal of spiritual maturity. He may have been deceived, or may have erred through ignorance, but is still responsible for his actions nonetheless. When under the heavy fire of temptation he may give in and deliberately commit a trespass, which is a departure from doing right. So we ask, in view of the Scriptural definitions of sin, what are some of these departures from the right? Let us be plain here. Immodest and provocative apparel inciting lust which then leads to adultery; hatred against the righteous, impatience, envy, bearing a grudge, foolishness and idle words, disrespect of those deserving of honor, lying and bearing false witness against the innocent, violence and all injustice perpetrated upon the innocent, thievery, and wanting what belongs to another, are all sin.

These are the sins against our fellow men. But what of the sins we commit against our Creator? There are *Ten Commandments*. Have we violated His seventh day Sabbath by bowing the knee to the papal Sunday? Have we falsified His holy name with titles such as *the lord*? Do we fill our houses with idols, but call them statuary in an effort to obscure the Truth? Do we reason that because we do not bow down and pray to these statues, we are not in violation of the second commandment? While most of the world face the challenge of poverty and hunger, can we really afford to lavish upon ourselves statuary?

There is no question about it. Those of ages past who were limited to a few scant versions of the Bible, with practically no research materials from which to follow a thorough line of investigation, were certainly accepted into the kingdom of grace by their sincere desire to have salvation. Their spiritual lives attest to their wonderful experience. There were some valiant warriors of a century ago. But we are now living in an age of spiritual apathy, and have forgotten that we were born into a raging war on a bloody battlefield. There is a veritable war going on between good and evil, and whether we like it or not, we are all participants in this struggle. And the first intimation of the state of war came in Genesis 3:15:

Genesis 3:15 **And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**

The seed of rebellion was sown in the Garden of Eden and has spread throughout the world from that moment onward. Rebellion is anarchy against the Kingdom of Heaven, and it comes in all forms and fashions. It is an insidious cancer that spreads wherever it is able to. It is this disease of sin from which we need to be healed, and the word salvation both in the Hebrew and the Greek signifies health, the finished product of healing. So contrary to the public opinion, there surely are spiritually healthy people living right now on the earth.

If then it is sin from which we need to be healed, and sin is the spirit of rebellion against the Law of יהוה, then we need to recognize the source of the problem, and reverse the process. If drinking alcohol is destroying our liver, then we need to reverse the process of drinking. This satanic enmity must be brought to an end. It is therefore the fallen, sinful nature from which we must be saved, that is, healed. And if it is still alive and well, this is evidence that we have not yet been saved, that is, healed. As there are fruits of the Holy Spirit, in like manner, there are fruits of the unholy spirit within the unconverted heart. And it is by our fruits that we shall be known. As an apple tree cannot produce lemons, neither can a lemon tree produce apples, and we may rest assured that no one is confused over the difference between the two.

2nd Corinthians 13:5 Make a test of yourselves, if you are in the faith; make certain of yourselves. Or are you not conscious in yourselves that Yahshua the Messiah is in you, if you are truly Messiah's? (BBE).

Perhaps we have so convinced ourselves that indeed, we are saved, or have been born again, but find upon close examination, that we seldom exhibit the sweet fruits of the Holy Spirit, and perhaps more often than not, display the sour fruits of the unholy spirit that lurks within the dark chambers of an unconverted heart. Oh yes, when people are around whom we wish to impress, we can imitate some of these good fruits, and we can fool some of the people some of the time, but the truth is, we cannot fool all of the people all of the time, and everybody knows that to be true.

So, what must I do to be saved?

The Jews believe they are saved by their obedience to the Law without the Messiah, and the Christians believe they are saved by their belief in the Messiah without obedience to the Law. But what is the Truth? What must we do to be saved from the disease of sin? This was the question asked by the Philippian jailer as found in Acts 16:30, and he was told to believe on the name of the Messiah Yahshua, and he would be saved. In view of this text, many have come away believing that that is all that is required of them, but we must remember that even the devils believe (James 2:19). Evidently something more must have been implied and understood in that response that night.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

(ISV) The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who disobeys the Son will not see life. Instead, the wrath of God remains on him.

Most versions correctly translate this verse as the *International Standard Version* above has done. Did He not state clearly, "*If you love Me keep My commandments*"? (John 14:15).

"If you love me, you will obey my commandments." (Weymouth NT).

We must understand that the issue is not necessarily salvation from hellfire, although that is comforting to know. The real issue in this matter of salvation should be the building of a deep friendship with our Creator. Don't we owe Him our daily life? It is selfish to just want to be rescued from danger or destruction, and be devoid of an enduring companionship with the One who paid the ransom for our soul. Why is it that the Bible or spiritual themes are seldom discussed amongst Believers? Is it only in the church or Assembly setting where it is proper to converse spiritually? If indeed the evidence of a changed heart is a changed life, and nothing really seems to have changed, is this not evidence of an unchanged heart? Isn't that the grand promise of the gospel, a changed heart? Isn't the denial of the spiritual birth the grand pretext to continue a life of sin? And isn't the outcome in the end, hypocrisy?

Ezekiel 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

The stony heart has no feeling for spiritual things. People want a religion that will pass for genuine when in fact, it is lifeless and dead. Aversion to the Law reveals a pretense of love for the Saviour. People want eternal life of course, but they want the world as well. The Law however is a transcript of our Redeemer's character; it is the pattern we are to follow. Why then, would anyone turn away his ear from hearing the Law?

Zechariah 7:11, 12 But they refused to listen, and turned their backs, and stopped their ears, that they might not hear. Yes, they made their hearts as hard as flint, lest they might hear the law, and the words which Yahweh of Hosts had sent by his Spirit by the former prophets. Therefore great wrath came from Yahweh of Hosts. WEB (World English Bible).

In the new heart experience mentioned earlier, we find the first thing our Father does is put His Holy Spirit within us and bring us into harmony with His Divine Law.

Ezekiel 36:27 I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my ordinances, and do them.

Hebrews 10:16, 17 "This is the covenant that I will make with them: 'After those days,' says יהוה, 'I will put my laws on their heart, I will also write them on their mind;'" then he says, "I will remember their sins and their iniquities no more."

We cannot claim the Born Again experience or salvation if we have not come through the gate of the Law. By the above text which delineates the new covenant, we find it is after He puts His laws in our hearts, then He washes away our sins. That is why it is a difficult gate to get through. If we think we are on the narrow path while loving and serving the world, trusting in a "finished work" done apart from us, we are deceived. We cannot go to high school or college without first going through grade school.

Galatians 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto the Messiah, that we might be justified by faith.

John 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

John 10:6 This parable spake Yahshua unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

And thus concludes our journey through Scriptureland. As we come into the haven of rest, we pray that every text and passage we have presented will have not only established the premise of the spiritual birth in this present time, but that we have also revealed the science of salvation, and the way we are born again. If you, dear Student of the Scriptures have not sought or experienced this spiritual birth, it is our prayer that you will go into a quiet place and there commune with your own soul, and with our Saviour Yahshua who loves us and gave His life a ransom for us. His cross is the solitary bridge to span the deep chasm from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of Light. It is the only way of escape. Let us run across that bridge to freedom.

Shalom.

שלום