

Building on the Foundation

Chapter 3

I want to take a look at some of the identification of Jesus as the Christ and what he taught about us partaking of his life, so we will start in a very familiar portion of scripture in the gospel of John the 3rd chapter. A man came to Jesus and he was a little bit worried about being associated with him, so he came at night. He came to him because of his teaching and because of the miracles that Jesus was doing. He asked him a question. Jesus said, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. This is part of the difficulty that men have relating to the gospel. Although Nicodemus was established in the law of Moses and the sacrifices of the tabernacle, when Jesus began to speak about being born again, he had a question as to how that was possible. So, Jesus continued to talk to him about it, and he said, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. I want to skip down here to the 12th verse where Jesus said, If I have told you earthly things, and you believed not, how should you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

This testimony was one that Jesus was making of the life that he lived. He brought more definition to that life in the 8th chapter of John, the 23rd verse. He said unto them, ye are from beneath; I am from above; you are of this world. I am not of this world. So, this is the same thing he was speaking to Nicodemus about – that if you're only born the first time of this world, you cannot see the kingdom of God. That isn't talking about seeing a physical kingdom. It's talking about understanding the things of the kingdom of God that are not seen. When he followed up with Nicodemus after Nicodemus asked how a man can be born a second time, Jesus said, If you don't understand when I speak to you concerning earthly things, how are you going to understand if I speak to you concerning heavenly things? The seeing of the kingdom wasn't that he would see with his natural eyes something physical, but he would understand a life that was not of this world.

Let's go back to the beginning of the gospel of John the first chapter, starting with the 11th verse. It says, He came unto his own and his own received him not. This is talking about Jesus being sent to the Jews, but it also talks about anything that is of the earth having a difficult time relating to that which is from the heavens. Jesus talked about how Israel persecuted the prophets that God sent to them. He spoke a parable when he was teaching saying, there was a man who owned a vineyard and he went into a far country. He hired men to take care of the

vineyard. He would send servants to those men to receive the benefit of the vineyard. They would beat them up and, in some cases, kill them. So, the man thought, If I send my son, surely, they will honor him. Jesus gave them a parable of exactly what had happened with the prophets that God sent Israel. In this parable he also spoke prophetically concerning his own death: that as you have not respected the prophets and you tortured and killed some of them, even though I'm the son that the master has sent to the earth, you are going to do the same to me, and they did crucify him. There is in this parable a specific picture concerning Jesus, but it serves also as a general principle that those things that come from God are despised by the world. Reading again in the 11th verse, it says, He came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name. Here again is a reference we saw in John 3 and also in John 1 in the 13th verse. Here it says, Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but were born of God.

I want us to consider this life that Jesus was referring to that is the born-again life because there are two men and each has a life, and those lives are different. One is a life that is of the earth; it's from below. There is also a life which is from above which is of the heavens. We are going to read what Paul had to say about this. Let's turn to I Corinthians 15 and I want to read the 45th – 48th verses. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. So, there are two men and descriptions of two different lives: one was a living soul; the other is a spirit life. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. Now, I'm going to turn over to the last scripture in II Corinthians 5:17. This is Paul writing to the Corinthian church again, Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The dimension we are talking about concerning this new life is that this life is the exact same life that Jesus lived when he was here on the earth. In the 8th chapter of John, we read that he said, I am from above; you are from below. That can be solved by being born again because you are born not of the earth, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh nor the will of man. But we read in the first chapter of John that we are born of God, and that is the 2nd verse that Jesus referred to when he talked to Nicodemus. What Paul said about being born again and being in Christ is that it makes that which is born again a new creation, not of the earth earthy but of the heavens heavenly. The responsibility we face in being born again – and we

will go back to John 3 when Jesus was talking to Nicodemus – is to recognize that now having been born again that we can see the kingdom of God, we understand the responsibilities of kingdom principles, and we have the opportunity to also enter into the kingdom of God. Not all of these things are accomplished just because you are born again. The opportunity of all these things is now possible since we have been born again. We know people that have been born again and, seeing some of their responsibilities by seeing the kingdom, have refused to make themselves available to those principles.

We see Jesus teaching parables concerning the kingdom of God, and he said there was a man who had a servant that owed him a lot of money. The servant couldn't pay the money and he begged his master for mercy. He said, Please, give me more time to pay. His master was so merciful that he forgave the debt. This is certainly the experience of someone who is seeing a different law working than the law of sin and death. This would clearly be representative of somebody who is born again and forgiven of their sins. But in the parable Jesus was teaching concerning the kingdom of God, the forgiven servant had a fellow servant that owed him a small amount of money, and he would not walk in the principles of the kingdom that he had experienced from his master. Not only would he not forgive his fellow servant's debt, he actually had his fellow servant put in prison. Here Jesus, teaching by parable, gives the example of someone that had an experience with the kingdom of God, was born again, saw the kingdom of God working but would not enter into the kingdom of God. He saw and experienced the benefit of the government of the kingdom of God. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, If you're not born again, you can't see the kingdom of God. This man saw the kingdom of God because he was forgiven, but he would not enter into the kingdom of God. He would not bring his life subject to the laws of a new kingdom. He wanted to live by the benefit of the laws of the kingdom, but he would not bring himself responsible to those laws.

What we find is that we can benefit by what God has done for us, but if we are going to walk in II Corinthians 5:17, it says, Old things must pass away and all things must become new. That means no more eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. What it means is a responsibility to forgive, and by bringing ourselves to the laws of the kingdom of God to operate as our accountability, we enter into a new government, one that not only has new laws but actually has the power to change us from being earthy to being heavenly.