

Who Is the Church?

John 3:1-8

Ephesians 1:1-14

Ephesians 2:1-10

Growing as Disciples in 2024

Who Is the Church?

- See Handout

The MIRACLE of REGENERATION (Ephesians 2:1-10)

★ What is a miracle?

➤ **What We Were – DEAD** (Ephesians 2:1-2)

- (v. 2) “. . . who were **DEAD** in trespasses and sin”

➤ **Not Only DEAD but SLAVES** (Ephesians 2:1-3)

- (v. 2) We, ALL, once walked according to the course of this world.
 - ➔ Friendship with the world is enmity against God. (James 4:4)
 - ➔ The love of the world means that the love of God is not in you. (1 John 2:15-17)
 - ➔ Those of the world are on the broad way that leads to death. (Matthew 7:13-14)
 - ➔ Those of the world “hear” the world because they are of the world. (1 John 4:4-5; John 15:18-19)
 - ➔ The world is evil. (John 7:7; Galatians 1:4)
 - ➔ **The whole world lies under the influence of Satan.** (1 John 5:19)
- (v. 2) We were slaves to Satan - “the prince of the power of the air”.
 - ➔ **Either** one has the Holy Spirit working in them **or** they have the spirit of Satan working in them. (Romans 8:14; Philippians 2:13)
 - ➔ **Either** Satan is your father; **or** God is your Father. (James 1:18; John 1:12-13; 8:41, 44; 1 John 3:1, 8-10)
 - ➔ **Either** you are a child of God **or** a child of the devil. (1 John 3:8-10)
 - ➔ “sons of disobedience” – **either** you are an obedient child of God (1 Peter 1:14-16) or you are a “son of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6; Isaiah 30:1; Colossians 3:6; 1 John 3:10)
- (v. 3) We are born slaves to our lusts and desires of the our flesh and minds.
 - ➔ **Either** we walk according to our ways, desires, wishes, wills; **or** we walk according to the Spirit according to the **written** Word of God. (Galatians 5:16-24; Romans 8:14; Luke 4:4)



7 January 2024

- (v. 3) Our nature: **Worldly/Sinful**
- Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:4; Psalm 51:5; contrast 2 Peter 1:3-4
- When Adam sinned **our** natures became CORRUPTED!
 - ✓ Our **minds** were **DARKENED**. (Eph 4:18; 1 Cor 2:14; 2 Cor 4:4)
 - ✓ Our **emotions** became **MISDIRECTED**. (Matthew 22:36-38 in contrast to 1 John 2:15-17)
 - ✓ Our **will**s became in **BONDAGE** to sin. (Hebrews 2:15; John 8:34; Galatians 4:3)
- (v. 3) We are born, **by nature**, “children of wrath just like everyone else”!
 - Every human being is born into this world with the WRATH of GOD abiding on them! (John 3:36)
 - MEDITATE on this!!!

BUT GOD

(Ephesians 2:1, 4-5)

- (vv. 1, 5) “HE made you alive . . .” – “HE” is GOD with no help from anyone!
- (v. 4) **BUT GOD** - and no one else!!!! - **THE ALMIGHTY GOD!**
- **BUT GOD** who is RICH in MERCY (Neh 9:17; Exodus 20:5-6; 34:6-7; Psalm 103:8-11; Deut 5:9-10; Daniel 9:4; **Romans 9:15-16**; Psalm 86:5, 15)
- **BUT GOD** with His **GREAT LOVE** He loved us. (Deuteronomy 7:7-8; Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10-19; Ephesians 3:18-19)
- **BUT GOD** made us **ALIVE** together with Christ. **GOD gave us LIFE!** (Romans 6:23) Only God can take and give life!

BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED!

(By the power of God and God alone - are CHANGED!)

(This is the “*exceeding greatness of God’s power toward those who believe*” - Ephesians 1:19)

THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IN US OR WE DID TO CAUSE GOD TO BESTOW HIS EXCEEDINGLY GREAT POWER (GRACE) UPON US!

You Must Be Born Again/From Above (John 3:1-8)

- **The Condition of Israel in John**
 - A **blinded** priesthood. (1:19, 26)
 - A **joyless** nation. (2:3)
 - A **desecrated** temple. (2:13)
 - A **spiritually dead** leadership. (3:1-3)
- **Nicodemus** (John 3:1-2)
 - A Jew, respectable, *very religious*, educated, mature, “good”, teacher – “teacher of Israel” (v. 10)
 - A Pharisee and member of the ruling Sanhedrin - a ruler of Israel.
 - Pharisees: zealous, evangelistic, tithers, pray-ers, read. studied and memorized the Scriptures – **BUT SPIRITUALLY DEAD!**

- Nicodemus falls into the group who *think* they are saved but are NOT.
 - A Jewish proverb stated, “If only one person was allowed into heaven he certainly would be a Pharisee.”
- **Jesus’ Treatment of Nicodemus** (vv. 3, 7)
- How did Jesus treat this respectable, religious, “good”, teacher of God’s Word? – **AS A SINNER!!!**
 - Jesus declares, “**I tell YOU the truth . . .**” (Verily, verily)
 - Jesus **begins** by telling Nicodemus that he **must** be *born from above*.
 - “You must start all over in order to see the kingdom of heaven.”
 - Jesus speaks a **conditional** sentence!
 - Jesus uses *strong language* to say **unless** or **except** a single condition is met **no one** will **see** the kingdom of heaven.
 - (v. 7) Jesus uses the **PLURAL** form of “you”. – ALL of God’s “chosen” people **must** be “born-again.”
 - (v. 7) Jesus uses the Greek term δέι dei {die} “must” which literally means “it is absolutely necessary, it is an absolute necessity, a necessity established by the decree of God.”
- **Water and Spirit** (v. 5)
- Just like there are two parents in a physical birth there are two “instruments” in spiritual birth.
 - “Water” is the *Word of God*. (Psalm 119:50; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Ephesians 5:26; Ezekiel 16:9; 36:25; John 6:63, 68; 1 Thess 2:13)
 - The “Spirit” is the One who gives life – who *quickens*. (John 3:6; 6:63; Titus 3:5-7) It takes BOTH for anyone to be born-again.
- **Flesh and Spirit** (John 3:6)
- Flesh is flesh and always will be flesh. There is **nothing** good in the flesh. (Romans 7:18) There will always be a FIGHT between the flesh and the Spirit. (Galatians 5:17)
 - God **does not change** the flesh. He **creates** something **NEW!**
 - The Spirit gives birth to spirit. The flesh has **nothing** to do with rebirth!!
 - Children born of God (John 1:13) are given His nature. (2 Peter 1:4; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26-27)
 - The Spirit gives us **NEW LIFE - a new way of living!**
 - We become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Our (new) nature **determines:**
 - ① Our **Appetite** (Job 23:12; 1 Peter 2:2; Philippians 4:8)
 - ② Our **Behaviour** (Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Matt 5:48)
 - ③ Our **Environment**. “A spiritual environment.”
 - ④ Our **Association**. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- **Wind and Spirit** (John 3:8)
- **SOVEREIGN** and **MYSTERIOUS** in their actions.

- Consider carefully . . .

- ① The wind is an element which man cannot stop or control! **So it is with the Spirit.**
- ② The wind neither consults man's pleasure nor can it be regulated by his devices. **So it is with the Spirit.**
- ③ The wind blows when it pleases, how it pleases, where it pleases, and as it pleases. **So it is with the Spirit.**
- ④ The wind is regulated (controlled) by Divine wisdom, yet, so far as man is concerned, it is absolute **sovereign** in its operation. **So it is with the Spirit.**
- ⑤ Sometimes the wind blows so softly it scarcely rustles a leaf; at other times it blows so loudly that its roar can be heard for miles. **So it is with the Spirit.**
- ⑥ The wind is indispensable; without it **everything** would soon die. **So it is with the Spirit.**
- ⑦ Sometimes the wind is purely local in its reach, at other times widespread in its scope. **So it is with the Spirit.**
- ⑧ The wind and the Spirit act according to God's will and God's will alone.

★ WE ARE SAVED BY THE SOVEREIGN WILL OF GOD!

How Do I Know If I Am Really Born-Again?

- What is your nature? What is the **EVIDENCE**?

Enrolled in the School of Christ (Discipleship) (Luke 9:23)

- All of God's special people do not know what they ought to know! (1 Cor 8:2)
- Enrollment is **IMMEDIATE**. **ALL** born-again Christians become **DISCIPLES** of **CHRIST**. If you are not a disciple you are not a Christian!
- The degree in the School of Christ: **BECOME LIKE CHRIST** (1 John 2:6; Ephesians 4:11-16; Ephesians 5:1; 1 Corinthians 11:1)
- "Take my yoke and learn from Me" (Matthew 11:29-30) Both verbs are in the **IMPERATIVE** mood and **CONTINUOUS** in their tense - they are commands.