

MSB260

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE GENERATION

by M.B. Hammond

In the Word of God one may find certain phrases and words that are figurative and not necessarily literal in meaning. One such notable example is found in John 3:1-4 where a Pharisee named Nicodemus came to Jesus by night stating, **Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.** So Nicodemus responded saying, **How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?** Nicodemus, like so many men today, failed to recognize the figures of speech Jesus was using. He did not immediately grasp the idea "to be born again" (*Gk.-gennao anothēn*) was completely foreign to his experience. The meaning of this figure of speech should be "to be generated from above," as John 3:31 explains, **"He that cometh from above (*Gk.-anothen*) is above all..."** Christ's statement therefore should read: "except a man *be given divine generation* he cannot even perceive (see) the concept of the Kingdom of God." Contrary to most expositors, the Kingdom of God is not something men will do, but rather it is the work of God redeeming this sin-ridden earth by establishing His own Kingdom (government) and judgments (His righteous order) in this world in the future.

Jesus went on to explain this idea another way. In 3:5-6 He said to Nicodemus, **I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and 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.** While many expositors see this explanation as invoking water baptism, Dr. E.W. Bullinger, in his book **Figures of Speech Used In The Bible**, calls this combination of "water and

spirit (no article in the Greek text)" the figure "hendiadys" or two words having the same meaning. Actually a literal translation would be "water and wind" which Christ alludes to in the next explanation. The word "water" (*Gk.-udor*) is used figuratively in Scripture many times. For example, in Revelation 17:15 it says, **The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.** Another example is when Jesus was speaking to the woman of Samaria at the well in John 4:14. **He said, But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting (*Gk.-aioion*) life.**

Jesus continues the explanation to Nicodemus in John 3:7-8. He states, **Marvel not that I said to thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, and canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.** Clearly, from this passage the concept of being "born again" (from above) is identical with being generated of the Holy Spirit (born of the Spirit). The word for "wind" normally is the Greek word *anemos*, but here it is the word *pneuma* and this is the same word translated "spirit." Jesus explains in His direct way that Nicodemus had already demonstrated his divine generation by saying, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God" (John 3:2). He had seen the miracles and had been given the faith to believe, now he had to act on it. He answered Jesus and said, "How can these things be?" (John 3:9). At that point Jesus called for him to believe by challenging him, **We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly (basic) things, and ye believe not, how shall you believe, if I tell you of heavenly (exalted) things?** No man could possibly comprehend such things without the help of God. He made the plan of salvation simple as John 3:15-17 states. But to accept that God does the marvelous work of divine generation to provide that faith is difficult for many men. They want something to boast about—like how they pulled themselves out of sin and how they were effective in saving others. It seems that the simple act of faith in accepting Jesus Christ is a real stumbling block, because men do not recognize that act of belief as the most important obedience to God's admonition that they will ever perform in their lives.

Paul makes a similar explanation in different words. In Ephesians 2:8-9 he says, **For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that (the faith) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of words lest any man should boast.** I have

been asked, "Is it the faith or the grace that saves?" I believe the next statement answers it simply. The divine generation of the Holy Spirit is the grace that provides each of us with the faith to believe in Jesus Christ, but we must accept and act on it. After all Paul says, **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them** (Eph. 2:10). I have also been asked, "Why did God choose to use this very simple plan of salvation? Why not make it harder so that we could work for it?" The truth is I don't know all the answers, but a few verses earlier (Eph. 2:4-7) Paul had explained that Christ/God was so rich in mercy, this love He has for us, and has caused us to be made alive together with Him (even though we were dead in sins): **And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places** (among the exalted ones) **in Christ Jesus: that in the ages** (the eons) **to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus** (2:6-7). Paul also says in Ephesians 1:4-6 (in a rendering taken from Otis Q. Sellers, Seed & Bread, No. 58), **According as He chooses us in Him before founding His order, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Himself through Jesus Christ ..., for the extolling of the glories of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved One** (Christ). This forcefully explains that this is all done for His glory and NOT ours. Our role in the Kingdom of God will be to give glory to the God of every grace, even as Israel serves to extol and glorify the God of a righteous government among men.

We know that the term "grace" is defined as "a love and favor that is undeserved." Truly we are totally dependent on His love, being the essence of the character of God. In 1 John 4:7-8 the writer says, **Beloved let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born** (generated) **of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.** In the next chapter John says in 5:1, **Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ** (Messiah) **is born of God; and everyone that loveth Him that begat loveth Him that is begotten of Him.**

Moving on in 5:6-8 John explains, **This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record** (witness) **in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.**

In 1 John 5:6 "the water and the blood" were noted, and when we compare the construction of 5:8, we see "the Word" and "the blood" brought together with the common factor of "the Spirit." These witness both in heaven and on earth, but the figure of "water" here in the earthly sense is represented by "the Word" in the heavenly sense. As we study this further "the blood" establishes the human nature of Christ who died on the cross for the sins of men. Mark 15:34 records that at the ninth hour, Jesus on the cross cried with a loud voice, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" In Mark 15:37, "Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost." What He said is also recorded in Luke 23:46, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Some people think that His being "forsaken" means He was a lesser god, but what we have to come to understand is that He who is God, **And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross** (Phil. 2:8). It is marvelous to contemplate those words of Paul, **For He (God) hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who (Jesus) knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him** (2 Cor. 5:21). The truth is that the only sin in His life was His death in the human form. Christ, who is God, did everything the Father spoke, but in death He could not express God, only man. That explains why He had been "forsaken," and why He commended His spirit to the Father at death. As a result, now He bears the titles "Son of God" and "Son of Man."

In conclusion, Jesus said in John 6:44, **No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day.** This is another allusion to the divine generation which brings men the opportunity to accept Christ. Do you think that all mankind has had this divine generation? I think not, but men who have never heard or had the Gospel presented, as well as all who died before His advent, will be treated fairly by God and many will be servants in the Kingdom. God will do a work in that day that goes beyond anything we could understand or even believe today. Paul said, **Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him** (1 Cor. 2:9). Today, we live in the Dispensation of Grace; it is the time of **The Silence Of God**, as Sir Robert Anderson titled his book. But God's arm is far from being "shortened," and for the believer in Christ the Holy Spirit is his/her ever-present confidant and support.

Yes, God does hear our prayers. In the future, we will be shown how many grand and glorious things He brought into our lives and we might not have even been aware enough to thank Him. Accordingly, that is our glorious God of whom we have the eons ahead to praise, extol and glorify!

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