

***According
To
God's Word***

**The New Birth
The Baptism In The Holy Spirit**

According To God's Word

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Founded by Sr. Pastors Bill and Elnora Owens in 1977.

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JESUS IS LORD

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Note: This was written by Joseph Frano. His publishing company (Rhema Publications) closed down some years ago. We have tried to contact him, to no avail. We believe these individual tracts, compiled into booklet form, will greatly bless your life.

Mark C. Smith, Pastor

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CHAPTER ONE

THE NEW BIRTH

What It Is and Why You Need It

ARE YOU AWARE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT STATEMENT EVER ISSUED TO MAN?

“YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN”

Why? Because without it you have no hope of enjoying the glories of heaven or of escaping the terrors of hell. Have YOU been born again? God spoke to us through Jesus and said, "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again' ” (John 3:7). Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

WHAT THE NEW BIRTH IS

IT IS THE WORK OF GOD by which each one of us, as a hell-deserving sinner, can receive a new life. It is a second birth, a spiritual birth. Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Romans 3:23). For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

The new birth is not a religion, it is not morality, it is

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not reformation.

It is a mystery words cannot explain, but a reality you cannot explain away. "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Jesus spoke those words to Nicodemus, a well educated religious leader, who was doing his best to gain heaven. Just as Nicodemus could not understand or explain the wind, so no man can really understand or explain the new birth. You do not have to understand all the mysteries of God. If religious Nicodemus needed to be born again, so do you. How do you expect to make it to heaven without being born again if Nicodemus couldn't?

It is with you as it was with Nicodemus. Keeping the law, going to church, joining a church, being religious, being baptized, or living up to a creed will not save you. There will be many in hell who did all of these things. Will you? Regardless of your denomination, "You must be born again."

The wind is a reality no man can explain away, only a fool will say, "I don't believe in the wind. I have never seen it, I can't understand it, so there just isn't any such thing as a wind." Many Bible rejecting, faith destroying "explainers" are denying the reality of the new birth. What they cannot understand they say just doesn't exist. They say the new birth is just an "emotional experience." When they get through explaining the new birth there isn't anything left of it. This is the failing wisdom of man. But the natural

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man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Thank God, no matter what the modernists say, the new birth is a reality no man can explain away! Ask the man who has been born again if there is anything to it! You cannot see the Holy Spirit. You cannot explain Him. But see His mighty power make the prostitute pure, the liar honest, the drunkard sober, the blasphemer pray, the fearful brave, the addict set free, and then try to deny the reality of it!

When some people are asked if they are a child of God, they say, "I hope so," or, "I think so." "I'm trying to be as best I can." Suppose you asked John Jones if he is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, and he'd answer, "I hope so," or, "I think so," "I'm trying to be as best I can." You would question his mind! He is not their son because he tries to be, but because he was born into their home. If you are a child of God, it is not because of your trying, but because you have been born into His family. If you are not a child of God, you actually have no right to pray, "Our Father . . ."

The physical life begins by birth. The spiritual life begins the same – not by joining a church and becoming religious. You cannot join the family of God. You must be BORN into it. Born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13).

A birth is the coming into being of a new life which

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has the nature of its parents. When you were born the first time, you were made a partaker of the nature of natural man. When you are “born again” you become a partaker of the divine nature. “by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (II Peter 1:4). Is this true of you? Do you have the divine nature? No matter what kind of a religious profession you have made, no matter how good a person you may be morally, unless you have been made a partaker of the divine nature by receiving Christ, you are not saved. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: (John 1:12). Some people don't like the word “saved,” but “saved,” is God's word! Jesus Christ is our Savior. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). When you receive Christ you are saved, converted, born again – call it what you will, it is the key to heaven.

But what about all the good things I have done? Won't this get me to heaven? Not according to God's Word, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Be sure you are born again! “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless indeed you are disqualified” (II Corinthians 13:5). Do you meet the test? Can you sense His

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presence within yourself? There may be a more spectacular change in the life of one who is a cursing blasphemer, but even in you who have not been down deep in sin, there has to be a change when you are "born again." There will be a new attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ, His Word, His people, and a new attitude toward prayer. Are you SURE you have been born again? "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold all things have become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). Have you become a new creature?

HOW TO BE BORN AGAIN

1. ACCEPT GOD'S WORD: THAT HE LOVES YOU AND WANTS TO GIVE YOU AN ABUNDANT LIFE. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish; but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "I have come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10b).

2. ACCEPT GOD'S WORD: THAT YOU ARE A SINNER; THAT THIS SEPARATES YOU FROM GOD; THAT YOU MUST TRULY REPENT, or "turn away" from sin. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to REPENTANCE" (II Peter 3:9).

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3. ACCEPT GOD'S WORD: THAT THE SHED BLOOD OF JESUS IS GOD'S ONLY PROVISION FOR MAN TO GET RID OF SIN. “. . . the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin” (I John 1:7). “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

4. ACCEPT GOD'S WORD: THAT JESUS CHRIST IS OUR ONLY CONTACT WITH GOD. “Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me” (John 14:6). “For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5).

5. RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND LORD BY YOUR PERSONAL INVITATION. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12). “Behold I stand at the door and knock; If anyone hears My voice, and opens the door, I WILL COME IN TO HIM and dine with him, and he with me” (Christ speaking in Revelation 3:20).

Do you feel a tug at your heart right now? This is how He knocks. Jesus wants in!

Will you receive Christ right now? You can be saved in 30 seconds! Open the door!

Pray now in your own words. God knows your heart . . . Pray something like this:

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“Lord Jesus, I truly repent of my sins. I turn my back on them right now and look to you! I ask you to forgive me. I open the door of my heart and receive you as my Savior and my Lord. Take control of my life, keep me from evil and make me the kind of person you want me to be!”

This is the point where you take your step of faith in God's Word. Thank Him for coming in whether you “Feel Saved” or not! “Thank you Lord for coming into my heart and for hearing my prayer as you promised.” Your life will start to change from this moment.

ASSURANCE

Did you ask Christ into your heart? Were you sincere?

Then where is He right now?

Christ said He would come in! He is not a liar.

If your answer is “Yes, Christ is in my heart,” YOU ARE BORN AGAIN. “He that has the Son has life (right now); he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God” (I John 5:12-13).

REMEMBER, even though you may sense the presence of God right now, you may not tomorrow! You are not saved because you “feel saved.” Your faith must stand on God's Word, not on feelings.

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HOW TO BECOME STRONG IN THE LORD AND STAY STRONG IN THE LORD

THANK THE LORD EVERY DAY FOR SAVING YOUR SOUL – Jesus said, “. . . He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21). Expect a change in your life!

WITNESS – Tell someone at every opportunity what you have done – that you have accepted Christ as your personal Savior. This is very important. If you truly love Jesus, you will want to tell others about Him, and He will “manifest” Himself to you. Read Romans 10:9-10. “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” ASK GOD to fill you with the Holy Spirit that you might be a powerful witness in every phase of your life – “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Luke 11:13).

READ GOD'S WORD EVERY DAY – You are a new born babe in Christ – you need food – it comes from God's Word. Start by reading the Gospel of John three times. Put yourself in the place of Nicodemus! The Bible will have new meaning to you now.

PRAY – Take time every day to kneel down and pray

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and praise His Name. Talk to God – out loud – just as you would to another person, and in the Name of Jesus.

SEEK THE FELLOWSHIP OF OTHER BORN AGAIN CHRISTIANS. You will grow strong in the fellowship. By studying and praying together you will be drawn into the meat of God's Word. You will be able to resist sin and receive the "Abundant Life."

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CHAPTER TWO

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

What It Is and Why You Need It

HAVE YOU RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YOU BELIEVED?

The apostle Paul asked this very important question of twelve saved disciples of Christ at Ephesus. . . . he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2). They were startled by the question. Later in Acts 19:6 “And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.” This should have been expected since in all four gospels we are told that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Ghost.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

Power for service. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you . . .” (Acts 1:8). Power in witnessing, not only in words but in claiming healing, deliverance, in prayer, in understanding the Word and power to overcome sin and live a victorious life. “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for us as we ought, but the Spirit Himself

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makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26). “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14). “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God (Acts 9:17-20). Even Jesus healed because He was filled with the Holy Spirit. “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). It is the power for your specific ministry.

MUST I SPEAK IN TONGUES?

Yes. This is important! This is a gift from God. Why would you refuse it? To refuse tongues is to refuse to yield yourself completely to God. If you will not yield completely, you cannot be used completely. It is important that you speak in tongues.

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WHO IS IT FOR?

Only for the 'born again' Christians. The Holy Spirit is not available to the world (the unsaved). "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:16-17). If you are not sure you are born again, be sure, before you seek the baptism. When you have truly become one of God's children, then "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him" (Luke 11:13).

It is not only for the apostles, or Jews, or people who lived in the days of the apostles, but for all saved people in every age. Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39). It is for all Christians that want a righteous life. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

A WORD OF ADVICE

Do not seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit if you do not honestly in your heart wish to be obedient to God

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and want Him to guide your life.

Once we learn to tune in to the leading of the Holy Spirit, we become a target for Satan, and he may try to confuse us by supernatural leadings. Most people have had some contact with the occult; that is, fortune telling, horoscopes, magic practices and games, spiritism, or false religious teachings. This occult involvement breaks the first commandment, is an abomination unto God and gives Satan legal access to our lives. "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Anytime one seeks supernatural answers without going through Jesus Christ, Satan has the right to answer. If one seeks the baptism in the Holy Spirit without first renouncing the entire occult involvement, he opens his life further to mental, physical and spiritual oppression. If you are seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it is vital that you confess your faith in Jesus, confess all involvement in occult sins, and promise to destroy all books and objects of the occult. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces

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of silver (Acts 19:19). Renounce Satan and all his works in your life and command him to depart in Jesus' Name.

We must pray for discernment, become educated in Satan's tactics and realize that all things supernatural do not come from God. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1). Many persons have fallen into this deception as they in ignorance thought themselves immune to attacks because of the baptism. First Peter 5:8 written to Spirit filled Christians tells us to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." We do not state this to discourage anyone. We have no need to fear, simply be alert to resist Satan and he will flee. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

We also have the assurance of God's Word that if God is your heavenly Father (you are born again), you will not receive anything evil when you ask of Him, but He will give you the Holy Spirit. "If a son asks from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:11-13).

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HOW TO RECEIVE

You may wish to have Spirit filled Christians lay hands on you as Paul did to the twelve believers at Ephesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:6). Or you may wish to wait upon the Lord as the 120 did on the day of Pentecost. When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4). Or you may just listen as Cornelius did. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God (Acts 10:44-46).

Praise God for His variety!

Raise your hands to the Lord, close your eyes and let your mind dwell on Jesus. Be happy in Jesus, as you ask your Father in heaven for what He has promised you. Start praising His Name. Raise your voice to Him. He will not force you to speak in tongues. As the Lord places a strange word in your mind, speak it out boldly, your lips may stammer, but as you boldly

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repeat the word, the Spirit will give you more words. Sometimes only a few words come initially, but as you continue to speak forth in faith the Lord will give you a complete vocabulary with which to praise God.

THE NEW LANGUAGE

The new language which the Spirit has given us is not only a sign of the initial reception of the gift of the Spirit, but also of His continuing presence. You do not have to wait for a special 'anointing' or sense the presence of the Holy Spirit to pray in tongues. It can be used at will and should be used continually to build yourself up. God's gifts are given for a purpose. Practice this new language of the Spirit until it becomes as natural as breathing. As you do, you will experience a new peace and joy of knowing the presence of the Lord.

God's Word tells us that praying in the Spirit 'edifies' us, or builds us up in the Lord. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church (I Corinthians 14:4). God's Word tells us also that we build up our faith by praying in the Holy Ghost. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20). You will later find this is one of your weapons in repelling the attacks of Satan.

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

St. Paul lists in I Corinthians 12, nine gifts or manifestations of the Spirit. These are the

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supernatural tools or equipment for Christian service. Any Spirit filled Christian can manifest any of these gifts as the Spirit directs.

1. THE WORD OF WISDOM is a supernaturally given revelation of God's direction and guidance for a specific situation. It tells us what God wants us to do about the situation.

2. THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE is a revelation of a piece of information which cannot be known in a natural way. It is God's diagnosis of a problem, a sickness, or other situation.

3. THE GIFT OF FAITH is an instantaneous complete assurance of God's willingness and ability to act in a given situation. Faith cancels doubt and this is essential to the gifts of healing and working of miracles.

4. GIFTS OF HEALING are special anointings of the Holy Spirit which enable us to bring God's healing power to those who are sick.

5. THE WORKING OF MIRACLES is a special momentary gift of authority which enables us to perform miracles in the Name of Jesus Christ.

6. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS is a supernatural gift which enables us to discern the difference between the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, and evil spirits. It is not the discerning of character nor of faults.

7. THE GIFT OF PROPHECY is an anointing of the Holy

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Spirit to speak the words of God. It is always for our direction, up building and encouragement.

Sometimes it may be for predicting future events, if God wants us to know them.

8. THE GIFT OF TONGUES is a supernatural means of

God's communication with His people. It is a message given in a language unknown to the speaker and is always used in conjunction with the gift of interpretation. The gift of tongues is not to be confused with the use of tongues as the sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, or with tongues used in private prayer and intercession, or with some foreign language used as a means of communication between people.

9. THE GIFT OF INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

gives back in one's own language the meaning of what was said in the gift of tongues. These two gifts operating together are equivalent to prophecy.

The exercise of any of these gifts requires cooperation between us and the Holy Spirit. He gives the gifts as He wills. He lets people know in a variety of ways when they are to exercise one of them. For the spoken gifts He will sometimes put in our mind the first few words. In the case of healing, often the hands begin to feel anointed. To heal, work miracles, or cast out demons we must be willing to lay hands, speak a word of command, or do anything else as He directs us.

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THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Immediately when we receive the gift of the Spirit, He begins some house cleaning in our lives. Things which used to bother us no longer do so. Fears, irritations and resentments begin to fall away. We begin to see people differently, more as God sees them.

The Spirit will also show us some more obstinate wrongs in our lives, some sins we hardly realized were there. When He does this, we have two alternatives. We can put up a fight, making life miserable for us, or we can turn these things over to Him to be removed and replaced with better things. If we choose the latter, He will continue this process with one thing at a time, just as fast as we will let Him, until we become mature persons, made over into His image. We do not try to make ourselves over. We have already tried that unsuccessfully all our lives. The Holy Spirit is in the sanctifying business. He is the one who can clean up our lives. All we have to do is let Him.

OUR PROPER RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE

1. To accept for ourselves these manifestations of His love, forgiveness for our sins, healing for our bodies, minds, and spirits and deliverance from all forces of evil.
2. To act as His agents in bringing these manifestations of His love to others.
3. To love God in return, to praise Him in the Spirit

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as commanded by Christ, “God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Use your tongues to praise Him daily in your spirit, which now has a language to express its love of Him.

The gifts are tools for manifesting the love of God. But on the other hand, love is necessary for the proper use of the gifts. St. Paul emphasizes this in I Corinthians 13 by saying that if we speak “with the tongues of men and angels” and exhibit many of the other gifts, such as prophecy, word of knowledge, faith, miracles, etc., but do not use these in love (to edify or help our neighbor) our ministry is worthless. God's gifts can be used or abused. We fulfill all of God's commandments to us when we use spiritual gifts to the glory of God and for the benefit of His creatures.

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