

Gospellogic.com

The Redemption of the World

You Must Be Born Again.

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being here. As we were saying, I was part of a particular group of Christians. Have you ever noticed how much we are all divided into groups and the persuasions that are just different enough to keep us from being involved with each other and the beat goes on? If it was just between religion to religion, it'd be one thing, but Christianity is divided amongst itself. It is as divided as many times as there are other religions on the face of the earth. I think from that, it should at least create a perspective in us, at least what it has done for me, to say that it is time to open my mind and do some thinking. If there are several tons of thousands of Christian organizations, to consider that my particular 'brand' might not be the right one. So, opening up to think is okay.

How many of you have been involved in different particular groups at least one and or several? Has every body here been involved and said, 'I'm a member or part of 'this' group.' We've all been there, in either one or several and how many of your were convinced that that group was the *right group*? We all were weren't we? Some of us a little more tolerant that there might be some other groups that *might* make it. We're not saying they're not going to make it, but *this* is the right way. Because of the massive division of the Christian community, it has provoked me as well as, I think, many of you, to stop and think that there may be something fundamentally wrong with the understanding of Christianity that causes such great fragments, it seems though, that we're fragmented on what is required to actually be a part of the Kingdom of God, or actually qualified for having been born again.

You know, as well as I do, that there's different groups; there's the Church of Christ, that thoroughly believes in Jesus, *but* if you are not baptized in water, you are not saved; There's the Pentecostal groups, which believe, not all of them but there certainly are Pentecostal groups that believe, that if you believe in Jesus, he's the only way, *but*, if you don't speak in tongues, you're not really born again. I don't need to go on and on and on. I'm sure that you know that the exclusions come based on works and performance and these are the ones that we keep really well. The other group doesn't keep those at all, but these are the ones that they have to keep really well. One thing that I give those credit, is that at least it gives us some place to go to feel accepted, *if* you accept the doctrines. It doesn't necessarily, however, create a great feeling of acceptance with *God*. Neither does it make you feel apart of the world community. It makes you feel like a part of your denomination. It can make you feel like you're a part of your group. It can make you feel like your accepted by those who believe like you do, but in many cases, we have great difficulty even communicating with someone who believes a bit *differently* than we do.

Now I always wondered why I got so nervous when I got around somebody who didn't believe *right*. Has anybody ever gone through getting nervous because somebody disagreed with you? I didn't like that about me. I thought, 'Why am I so nervous, why am I so concerned that they've disagreed with me.' Then all of a sudden my heart would start pounding. I was like, 'I've got to defend all of this stuff that I believe.' I think all of us have had, as much as we may have come from, and maybe still are in different groups, quite similar experiences as far as the group mentality is concerned. Whether the groups are right or wrong, we are not going to challenge. We may find out that we're all wrong tonight; we may find out it makes no difference tonight. But, we're going to look at something that I

believe that Evangelical Christianity has looked at in a very fundamental way, instead of debating the difference between groups. We are going to challenge if they are *ALL* wrong, including *mine*, the one I've been dedicated to for the better part of 20 years of my life. We're going to look, not at the doctrines between groups of Christians, but the fundamentals of Christianity itself.

How many of you are willing to consider that because Christianity is fragmented so many thousands of times, that there may be something fundamentally wrong with it's concepts? How many of you are willing to at least stop and think about that? I think all of us are. I think that most of the Christian community is willing for the first time to actually after many years to stop and say, 'okay, it's not me defending my group, I *really* want to know the *truth* now. No matter what group I *belong* in, I'm willing to think, or at least entertain the thought that I might not have entertained before. And maybe not be quite so intimidated by that though.'

There is one unifying bond that most of Christianity sticks to and we're going to look at the principle of that. We're going to look at it's requirements and then we're going to look and see about what teaching we can come with that others have taught on. I'm not going to try very hard to teach to you what I think. Instead we're going to try to teach what some other people have taught, long before I came around. They did some good teaching on the subject, maybe about 2000 years ago. And that subject is, you must be born again. How many of you, whether you were Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, or what ever group, how many of you know that concept that you must be born again? Who laid that concept down for us? Jesus Christ himself said, 'You must be born again.' And if you're not born again, you can't even see the Kingdom of God. You cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

Now, as we look at this though, we know the requirement is there, but I think it's important to stop and realize that Jesus laid down several *other* requirements, so that we may bring this into a realm where it's okay to question what he actually meant. How many of you know that Jesus said that if you want to go to Heaven, you must sell everything that you have and give it to the poor? Okay, I'm the poor and I'm going to take that designation tonight. No, but Jesus *did* tell the rich young ruler, he said, "I want eternal life, tell me what I have to do." Jesus gave him six things to do and lo and behold he had done those things. Then *instead of running away*, I call him the most foolish man in the Bible, because Jesus said, all you have to do is these six things. 'Ahh, I've done those six things.' I would have *run*. I think I would have run proclaiming I asked the Master what I had to do to have eternal life. He said these six things. But you know what the dumb, dumb did? He would not accept what Jesus said, he then turned and said, 'What do I lack yet.' You don't ever want to ask what you lack because somebody *knows* what you lack yet.

How many of you have found out yourself that know matter how far you progress in Christianity, you still lack something yet? Something's got to change; something's not right; something's not complete; something's not perfected; you're not tithing good enough; you're not praying good enough; your worship life isn't there; your bible study life isn't there' you're thought life. Oh God, we won't go in to that. I don't want to know what your thoughts are and believe me; you don't want to know what my thoughts are. So, we then begin this self-examination of *us*, rather than of *God* and *redemption*. The requirement, you must be born again, cannot be overlooked, however, it can be examined. I want you to know that I believe that and I accept that.

Now, the question is, 'who is born again?' Isn't that the question that Christianity's been trying to resolve for years? Are you born again simply because you believe in Jesus; or are you born again because you believe in Jesus and stopped smoking? Are you born again because you believe in Jesus and you women stopped wearing make-up? Are you born again because you believe in Jesus and

speak in tongues? Are you born again because you believe in Jesus, drop out of society, and join the *group*? You see I could go through with these statements for the rest of the night and several nights to come. You know as well as I do that there's many brands of Christianity and the requirements as to what *they say* is going to validate that you have been *born again*, are going to change from group to group. You can go to one group and they'd say, 'You've been born again.' another group would say, 'OH NO you haven't.' How many of you've ever had people question or not whether you have been born again? '*You're not REALLY saved*' because if you were *really saved* you would ... then the list. And it depends on the group that you're in. So, we're not here to pick on *one group*, we're here to pick on *all of them*.

I don't want to discriminate, so we want to pick on everybody. We want to pick on every Christian group in the face of the planet Earth, including the ones I have been thoroughly dedicated to. How many in your thorough dedication to, as I have been, to a particular Christian group, have become some where along the line disillusioned, that what was promised doesn't seem to be panning out? You see, you and I sit in the same position. We sit in the same position, representing multiple millions of Christians around the world. They sit in the very same seat that you sit in, disillusionment, wondering whether or not, 'I'm in the *right group* or not.' Or they are convinced that they are, and therefore, no one else in any other group is going to make it. This is a very primary thing. We're going to be dealing with this and various similar things all the way through.

As we approach this, I want to go ahead and tell you what we're dealing with so that you're not going to have to try to figure it out, because maybe someone's not said it before. I want to go ahead and tell you what I want to be teaching you tonight. I hope you don't get frightened, jump up, and run off. And I hope that you sit and listen and then decide for yourself. Believe me that by listening to this, no demons are going to jump on you. And you're not going to have a deceiving spirit get on you. You're still going to have a mind that can think and decide what you believe for yourself. For many years, Christianity has eliminated everyone from eternal life, expect those who follow some form of prescribed belief system that which ultimately is called being *born again*. How many of you would agree with that? Now, whether or not you are *born again*, what actually constitutes *being* born again?

Some groups believe that to be born again you must be you must be water baptized. If we only took the issue of water baptism, how many of you know that there are dozens of different Christian groups as to how this is suppose to be done? The Catholics sprinkle, the Protestants dunk. There are those that baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Then there are those who say that if that's the way you're baptized, you're not *really born again* because you have to be baptized in the name of *Jesus* only. So, we could find out what everybody, every group believes and do what all of them say, where you've covered the entire basis, or we could examine the basis of the logic that is propelling literally, tens of thousands of belief systems within Christianity. That's what I'd like to do.

What I'd like to do is to propose to you the possibility that when Jesus died on the cross and raised from the dead that he redeemed the *entire world by Himself*. That a man's belief system is not going to change his eternal destiny. That it was the completed work of the *Cross* that changed the destiny of every human being born before and after the cross. There's a statement that is made called, 'Jesus is Lord.' I began to think about that statement and I began to think about Jesus losing at least half of the human race and who was going to be qualified for hell. I've questioned and my own Evangelical persuasions and I realized I did not hard core believe this. I soft core believed it, that you had to go through this to *gain* eternal life.

Then of course we made the baby exclusion. How many of you or your group made the baby exclusion, that babies don't count; they're all going to Heaven until the age of accountability, because

how could we be so cruel? Isn't it amazing that there's not one word about that in the New Testament? Yet, we know that is just too harsh to think about so we readily adapt a doctrine that is not even in the Bible, in the New Testament called the 'Age of Accountability.' The age of accountability is strictly an Old Testament concept. It has nothing to do with the point to which a person becomes responsible for believing in Jesus. There is not that point.

I remember when I first believed in Jesus, I was five years old. My Sunday school teacher talked to my mother and my mother brought in the great question as to whether or not I could truly have been born again when I was five years old because I had not reached the age of accountability. Well, I believed in Jesus when I was five as strongly as I believe in Him now. In fact, I had some Pentecostals talk me out of the fact that I had accepted Christ because my life hadn't been live perfectly up to that time. So, therefore, I surely had lost it somewhere along the way. The Baptist's convinced me that I never was really born again because if I went back and did something that I did before I converted, then I never *really* was born again in the first place. That was the group that we taught once saved, always saved but it's actually not once saved, always saved. Its if saved, maybe saved. The difference between the Baptists and the Pentecostals is the Baptists preach that it's salvation by Grace without works. However, if your works don't measure up, they say you were never born again in the first place. At least the Pentecostals give you the out of doing it all over again. It worked the first time. Yes, you are born again, you lost it, get started again and you're reborn again all over again, again.

I thought the Pentecostal view was more legalistic than the Baptist view. But when I began to look at it I realized, the Pentecostals didn't *doubt* my being born again, they just said I lost it. The Baptist doubted that I ever got it in the first place. So, how could I be sure I got it the second time if I didn't get it the first time? There are many, many views. The Catholicism teaches that if the Priest baptizes you as a baby, then you're in. So, the concepts are far and wide that is for sure. I am going to introduce you to a concept that is a departure from modern day Evangelical Christianity. Is it possible that the requirement to be born again was fulfilled by Jesus for the entire human race? First off let me ask you, could he have done it? I'm not asking you *if* He did, *could* He have done it? Being God, could He have done it? He came to this earth; He came with a purpose, what was His purpose? His purpose was to redeem the WORLD. Does it say He came to redeem a few? NO. It says he came to redeem the *entire world*; Jew and Gentile. We're going to go on in to this as we said a little more in detail.

Now first off let's look at this place where it is spoken that you must be born again. I believe that anyone who has not been born again does not have eternal life as the bible says, but we're going to check and see what belief has to do with being connected to being born again. There are several subjects in the bible that modern day Christianity has mingled together. One of those is believing and being born again. Both subjects are in the bible but they are not combined in any teaching that I can find. Now we find the thing that Jesus stated, again remember also, the same Jesus who said you must be born again said that if your eye offend you pluck it out. He said, if you're hand offends you, cut it off. He said if you really want to be born again, sell everything you have and give it to the poor. Anybody who came to Jesus asking, what do I have to do, went away, not with great hope of eternal life, they went away shaking their heads. Saying, 'You know, I came to the Messiah to find out to get this, or to the Great Teacher and her I am. I'm walking away down cast and I can't follow this.' Jesus slowly eliminated everyone.

Do you remember the verses that say, 'there was one day He got up with this great new teaching and He told them, except you eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, you can not enter the Kingdom.' The bible records that day; that many turned from Him that day. The march continued on of Jesus laying down requirements and edicts, which people could not live up to. One of those, which we're going

into in another session, is that you had to believe. The fact of it is the requirement to believe was not met by anyone when Jesus walked this Earth. In fact the requirement to believe was here when Jesus walked the Earth and no one measured up at all. Even all-12 disciples denied Him before His death. Now we remember very flagrantly Peter's denial but the fact is Jesus said to the disciples, 'you will all deny me.' Peter said, 'not me Jesus. I'm your stick-em to-em disciple. I will never deny you, even if it costs me my life.' Jesus said, 'Before the rooster crows tonight, you will have denied me three times.'

At that point, man had failed at every requirement God gave for redemption. Obedience to the law, belief in his Son, they had failed on every point. Jesus had already given the true prescription though for being redeemed. And he said, 'you must be born again.' The story is found in one place in the Gospels, John 3. John 3:1- 3:4¹ There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, 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.³ 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.⁴ Nicodemus saith unto him, 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 realized that absolute impossibility of following this commandment that a man could be born again. Jesus goes into some detail then and explains a little further what he meant.⁵ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Now this statement is going to be very important as we follow this out and we find the teachings then in the letters that come after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. How many of you know that there are many things stated in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? But if you don't find it taught on by the Apostles, you're left to surmise or assume what that statement meant. Later on, Paul taught, and James and John, taught on many of the statements based on the statements that Jesus made. They went on and taught on those in a clarifying way. AS you know, Jesus spoke many of these things in parables. Then, later on, went and explained to His disciples what those things meant. People didn't understand these statements. He told Nicodemus, vs 6 ... 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.'

Now that's vitally important that we keep that concept of what being born again is. The difference is that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Modern day Evangelical Christianity equates, that which is born from your mother's womb. How many of you would agree that that is what we look at that as? Then to be born again, there has to be a spiritual birth after your physical birth. That's what we're bringing in to question. If that is true, do you believe that somewhere along the line, one of the Apostles is going to expound on this being born again experience? They're going to expound on it somewhere and the fact of it is they do. Let me go ahead and warn you in advanced, it is not based on the premise that modern day Evangelical Christianity places this premise. Making being born again a personal individual experience but instead something much higher and much more worthy of the Lordship, the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Now, so being born again, what is the difference between being born again. What is being born again? That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. That is the comparison as to what is born again. Something is first born, how, of the flesh. Then what is its second birth, it is born of the spirit. So being born of the flesh and being born of the spirit are two very strong biblical terms. Now, if you follow Paul's study out about the flesh and being born of the flesh, it's very interesting. We're going to go into one chapter of his teaching on this and it is thoroughly conclusive as to what he is talking about and it leaves no confusion at all. You will find that Evangelical Christianity's definition of being born again, is not in the bible. Let me say again, I did not say that being born again is not in the bible. I have been a modern day Evangelical Christian for

over 25 years, active. I have done what most people only talk about. I have gone out on the streets for eight hours a day, right here in Florida. Burned blisters on the bottoms of my feet in my 20's, walking the beaches, introducing Jesus to people so they could be born again. I have knocked on doors of communities. We mapped them out and went to their doors. I have watched people's lives change drastically from believing in Christ. So, I say that to qualify the fact that I'm not an outside observer of this or an outside critic.

I did it as a good Baptist; I did it as a good Charismatic. I've done it under the most Evangelical persuasion that I know of, I don't know a stronger one. I don't meet people who dropped out of society all together to go knocking on doors to win people to Jesus *eight hours a day*. I do not run into them. I just don't. Now, I'm not speaking that to pat myself on the back. I'm just speaking that to tell you how persuaded I was and how motivated I was by modern day Evangelical Christianity. We traveled, my wife and I, this nation, campus to campus and went in to fraternities and sororities. Places where you didn't go evangelize, if you've ever been in a fraternity or sorority in America; you didn't go there. We came up; we joined somebody that had a bogus business that got us in the door. But, our goal was to sneak in, under cover and share the Gospel to get these people born again. I want you to know I've been thoroughly persuaded of it. So, for me to change my mind about this, I had to be able to resolve, 'what did I do with my life all of those years?' That is one of the things that I definitely had to question. 'What has been going on here? What has happened in the process of my life?'

All right, so the difference in this is what we're looking at; the difference between being born of the flesh and born of the spirit.⁷ Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. Now how did He describe being born again? It's very strange; it does not fit within the Evangelical plan. He describes it this way,⁸ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Now folks, He didn't say being born of the spirit is like somebody coming up and leading you through a prayer of salvation. What did He say? 'Everyone that is born of the spirit, it's like the wind blowing on them.' How many people born of the earth that lived a life has had the wind blow on them? Jesus said that is who has been born again. It's just like the wind. You don't know where it came from. So there's people born again that don't know where it came from. There's people born again, who don't even know they are. That's what the statement is qualifying here. Do you see that the well laid out Evangelical plan is not in the description of being born of the spirit; that it's totally outside?

How many of you believe that the wind is outside of man's control? Is he saying here that being born again is completely outside of man's control? Well it seems to indicate that but we're not going to take that as absolute fact until we examine at least a teaching done by the Apostle Paul, great teacher of the Gospel for sure. We're going to see what he has to say about it also.⁹ Nicodemus answered and said unto him, how can these things be?¹⁰ Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?¹¹ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.¹² If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

So now we have two more qualifying words here; born of the flesh, born of the spirit; earthly, heavenly. Do you see that he has qualified these in the same text and in the same category? Something that is fleshly is what, it is earthly. If something is born of the spirit, what is it; heavenly. Now, when Jesus said 'I've told you about earthly things', think about what modern day Christianity calls earthly things; It all depends on the group; sex, drugs, rock-n-roll, smoking, certain way of dressing. Did Jesus tell us about any of those things? So, you see, first of we know that the concepts of the fleshly and earthly have been totally misinterpreted by modern day Christianity. And if what is fleshly has been misinterpreted by modern day Christianity, could what is born of the spirit or what is

heavenly been misinterpreted? It's not only possible, if the first, which is the comparison has been wrong, the second being compared is inevitable to be *wrong*.

Now, Jesus said, 'I've told you there's fleshly things and earthly things.' They're synonymous, Paul's teaching about what the fleshly and earthly. Do you know that Paul ascribed being fleshly as being someone who is under the law trying to achieve righteousness by their deeds? That is a fleshly person. Now, I don't know about your experience in modern day Evangelical Christianity. But no one in any church that I went to said, now you don't want to be fleshly now and go around trying to be righteous by your deeds. Now they warned me about being fleshly. Did they warn you about being fleshly? But, what did they warn you about, 'conduct'. The way you act, what you say, where you go, or did you go to the movie, did you go to church, are you spiritual? The difference between spiritual and fleshly, or earthly was based on conduct. Now, again, that conduct, based on the group that you're in, varies many thousands of times as to *what* conduct is fleshly.

Now, in the Pentecostal realm, fleshly is you ladies cutting your hair, putting on make-up and looking good. If you were in the group I was in, the Word of Faith movement, the gussier you were, the word gussy comes from the South I think somewhere, but the more make up a lady had on the more elegant she was. The higher the heel, the more elegant she looked, the more spiritual she was. So here we had two totally opposite views of even fleshly and spiritual. In one group, being fleshly was having a Cadillac. In my group being spiritual was having a Cadillac. And the beat goes on. Again, there's no need in me going through several tens of thousands of persuasions of Christianity. I think you get the point. I think everyone listening to the tape will get the point also. There's many, many, many. The difference between being born of the flesh and born of the spirit he says,¹² If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

So, you see, it is not an assumption of mine that if we misinterpret what Jesus called 'earthly and fleshly' what Paul called 'earthly and fleshly', you can not possibly understand what spiritual is until you understand what is earthly and fleshly. The terms carnal show up in the writings of the New Testament. Earthly, carnal, worldly, fleshly, how many of you've heard those? Are all of them without exception, no matter what the group is, based in conduct? Without exception worldly, fleshly, earthly and carnal. Oh, you're just 'carnal Christians'. Well, the statements come out very clear in Hebrews, that which was carnal and fleshly, that which was carnal and earthly was the law. And it was fleshly and earthly to try to obtain it to be right with God. People were of the flesh who were under the law. Paul made the statement in Romans, he says, 'For when we were under the law, we were in the flesh.'

Now Christianity says, well if you're not under the law, you're in the flesh. Totally the opposite of what the Apostle Paul described as being in the flesh. Now, turn with me, at least tonight we are going to 1st Corinthians Chapter 15. Now we let the Gospels speak for themselves and let them declare what we are comparing is what is born of the flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. How many of you agree that the teaching of Jesus said that unless you are born again, you will not see the Kingdom of God. That is just absolutely emphatic. There is no possibility for misunderstanding that statement. It's said clearly, it's said straightforward. The question is, what validates being born again, that we've not brought in to question. I never brought into question what being born again was.

I was told being born again was when you believe in Jesus then you're born again and I can't find it in the bible. I just accepted it. Now, I can find where it teaches us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. I can find where that belief brings a salvation and the term salvation is literally a real changing in the heart and the mind. Salvation is a very broad word but is something wonderful that happens. Or, can being born again make a believer out of you? Now, so far, modern day Christianity says being a

believer can make you born again. Have you ever noticed that Christianity has in the past had a tendency of putting the cart before the horse? All right, now, that's what we want to exam tonight. Not the issue of validity of believing, not the issue of the validity of being born again but which one produces which one? Does believing create being born again, being born of the spirit? Or does being born of the spirit and having that revealed to you make a believer out of you? Which one does it do?

Now first off, is being born again is outside of man's control? Kind of sounds like it is by the description Jesus gave, the wind blows where it will, the man that it blows on, he doesn't know where it came from, once it hit him he doesn't know where it's going. He can't tell what the wind is doing. Now, this is what we are proposing to you. This awesome, awesome possibility, that truly those that were born of the flesh had no hope. But who were born of the flesh? Could it be those who were born of the flesh are not those who came out of the womb necessarily, but those that were born of the flesh were everyone who was born after Adam? Does the bible teach that everyone that was born after Adam was born in to a fleshly realm, no longer spiritual, but born in to sin itself?

Romans teaches us the first and second Adam concept. Romans 5 says that after Adam's disobedience, how many people became sinners in God's eyes, everyone without exception. Did anyone have to believe in Adam to be a sinner? No, they didn't have to believe. Did they have to know he existed? Did their lack of knowing his existence change their condition brought on by the disobedience of one man? Their ignorance did not.

Mike Williams Ministries

<http://www.gospelrevolution.com>

<http://www.gospellogic.com>