

## BORN AGAIN: LIVING SACRIFICE

As we continue on this topic of "Born Again", I want to emphasize the foundation we have laid in our prior newsletters from **1 Corinthians 15:45**. This speaks to how the first man Adam became a living being and the last man Adam became a life giving spirit. I have been highlighting this area to bring more clarity to: the natural life and spiritual life, to the physical body and spiritual body, to the natural mind and to the spiritual mind.

In **Genesis 2:7** before the fall, God defines the creation of man, as He formed the physical body including the physical soul (mind), to breathe life into both. **1 Thessalonians 5:23** expresses man divided into three parts. As we look at the second half of **1 Corinthians 15:45** we see Paul describe Jesus as the last Adam who became a life giving spirit. In this verse from **1 Corinthians** we see the word spirit used. This "spirit" is not referring to the Holy Spirit, it is referring to a spirit given to humanity from Christ; the born again human spirit.

The new birth occurs within our human spirit, it is not a product of our first birth of water (as described in **John 3:5-6**). ***This does not mean our human spirit does not exist before we are born again, it simply clarifies after the fall of humanity and the process of losing spiritual identity, the human spirit is veiled by the natural man. The spirit now has no identification outside the natural man until we are born of the spirit; until we are born again.***

Isn't this the essence of circumcision as defined by Paul in **Romans 2:28-29**? "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God." The writer of Proverbs tells us that "the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord" **Proverbs 20:27**.

Reading from the Greek in **John 6:63** Jesus essentially tells us it is the Spirit (Holy Spirit), who gives us life. The flesh profits nothing, (it can't give life), the words that I speak to you are (for a man's spirit) and they are life. So, we see Jesus becoming a life giving spirit through His own life, death, and resurrection. His entire life here on earth and His death on the cross was for our benefit and would ultimately serve as the doorway for our spiritual life. We can see that Jesus did the work for our benefit

but there remains something for us to do as well. We must exercise faith in committing ourselves - spirit, soul and body - into a union with the Lord Jesus. This is to say, we must reckon the death of the Lord Jesus as **our** death. We see this expressed in **Romans 6:5-11**, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let us be careful **not** to separate into two distinct matters; the death of the Lord Jesus as our **substitute**, and our death **with** Him. Even though I am referring to two deaths here, the two are inseparable. Substitutionary death and co-death should be distinguished but never separated. If one believes in the death of the Lord Jesus as his substitute he already has been united with the Lord Jesus in His death, (**Romans 6:2**). Jesus suffered death for us therefore we have died in Him, there can be no salvation otherwise.

When a person is not united with the Lord he has not yet been born again, therefore has no part in Him. In **John 3:14-15**, our Lord informs us how we are united with Him, it is through believing in Him we receive everlasting life. Just as He was lifted up, we are lifted up and united with Him in His crucifixion and His death. This truth places our spiritual life with Him and it also positions our natural life in His sacrifice, this is why we reckon ourselves dead. **Romans 12:1** expresses that we are to offer ourselves a living sacrifice, it is our reasonable service. We will continue next month on this subject, have a blessed February.

LOVE,  
JANN T. BUTLER

