

Conversion vs. Regeneration

If you found Charles Manson living next door to you in heaven, would you want him just “forgiven” – or would you want him CHANGED?

Throughout the Christian church, particularly the Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations, most members think of themselves as “born again.”

But what does being “born again” really mean?

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a “ruler” of the believers in God (the Judeans – those who worshiped in the temple in Jerusalem – as opposed to those who worshiped pagan gods, which the Bible calls - the **nations**) a high level leader of the “Organized Church” of that time. He came one night to have a talk with Jesus. Jesus said to Nicodemus:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3

The literal translation of the original Greek words “born again” should be “**born from above**.”

In order to grasp the magnitude of Jesus’ words, we must understand who Nicodemus was.

At that time, Nicodemus had the stature, position, and respect of the people in the Organized Church that would be equivalent to someone like Billy Graham, today.

What would the Christian church of today think if Jesus said to Billy Graham:

“You need a change of heart. You don’t even understand the Scriptures. You have no spiritual understanding because you only understand through your five senses.

“You don’t understand even the basics of my amazing plan of Salvation, yet you appear to be so religious. You accept the respect of the people as though it is warranted, you claim to know God, but you do not know Me or my ways, and you know nothing about spiritual things.”

The Christian world would be totally shocked. Yet that was the stature of Nicodemus in his day. And the words of Jesus to Nicodemus were appropriate then, just as they would be appropriate for Billy Graham today.

Furthermore, Jesus later told the common people:

“Unless YOUR righteousness **EXCEEDS** the righteousness of the Pharisees (including Nicodemus, representing the LEADERS of the “Organized Church” including present-day people like Billy Graham), you shall in NO case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:20

The people believed then, as they do now, that their religious leaders, knew - and know - the Lord, that they were - and are - holy, that they were - and are - certain to be SAVED. Yet Jesus was clearly telling the people, “Do NOT follow these “Christian” leaders. Do NOT follow the leaders of the Organized Church. They are the “blind leading the blind, and both will fall into a ditch.” (Luke 6:39)

Instead, Jesus said, “Follow ME.” “Do as I do.”

Many pastors preach sermons about *justification* and *sanctification*, words that seem obtuse and irrelevant to the average Christian. The word *justification* is essentially synonymous with the word *conversion*. It means that a person understands that:

1. God exists
2. Jesus died for our sins
3. We need to be forgiven of our sins
4. We should follow Jesus

This is “entry level” Christianity. And about 99% of all Christians never progress above this level. This is what Christians define as being “born again.” This is all the average Christian believes is necessary to be “saved.”

Forgiven – or – Changed?

But to be *forgiven* is NOT the same as to be “Changed”!

When Jesus told Nicodemus,

“Except a man be born from above, he cannot SEE the kingdom of God.”
(John 3:3)

Jesus meant that one cannot understand spiritual things – he cannot SEE (understand) the kingdom of God – **unless** he is born from above.

Sense Knowledge vs. Revelation Knowledge

There are two kinds of knowledge: Sense knowledge and Revelation Knowledge.

Every step in progress in the fields of Chemistry, Mechanics, Metallurgy, Surgery, Mental Sciences and the Arts, has come from one common source: our Five Senses.

The Five Senses -- Sight, Touch, Hearing, Taste, Smell -- are the source of all this knowledge. However, the Senses can only grasp physical, material, things. And the Senses may become impaired by accident, carelessness, overwork, or dissipation, so that they are not to be depended upon. They are not absolutely true.

And their findings are continually being revised. Science is constantly changing!

As author E. W. Kenyon points out in his book *Two Kinds of Knowledge*, the Five Senses cannot know the beginning of things. They can only speculate when they arrive at the last frontier of experimentation. The Five Senses know nothing about: The Reason for Creation, The Reason and Origin of Man, The Origin of Life, The Origin of Motion, The Origin of Matter.

The Darwinian theory of Evolution was born out of Darwin's lack of knowledge of the Reason for Creation, the Origin of Matter, of Light, of Motion, of Gravitation - - - and he was unwilling to accept Revelation Knowledge, Knowledge from the Bible.

But his Sense Knowledge could not find God, so he could not believe in God.

He could not find life in the plant that he dissected, yet he admitted there was life.

He could not see thought, yet he believed in it.

He could not see the brain function, yet he knew that it did.

He could see the design in Creation, but he was unwilling to admit that there is a Designer, because Sense Knowledge cannot find Him.

Sense Knowledge is developed by reading Sense Knowledge literature. Revelation Knowledge grows by reading the Scriptures that were designed to be its food, for "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Matt 4:4)

We want to believe in things that we can see, hear, feel, taste or smell. We believe in material things because we can feel them and see them. But we have a hard time believing in God because we cannot see Him.

But can you see love - or hate - or fear? These are far more powerful than material things. But you can see none of these, you can only see the effects of them.

Spiritual things are as real as physical things. Spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst cannot be satisfied with philosophy or metaphysics.

But the natural man, the “soulish” man, the man who understands the world through his five senses, CANNOT understand spiritual things.

‘For the natural (literal = soulish) man receives NOT the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because spiritual things are spiritually discerned.’ 1 Cor 2:14

The man who can only understand through his five senses CANNOT understand the Word of God. He CANNOT understand spiritual things, because spiritual things are ONLY spiritually discerned. Spiritual things are ONLY understood through Revelation knowledge, NOT through Sense knowledge. They are ONLY understood through God opening up our mind and putting His disposition in our hearts. Spiritual things CANNOT be understood through the five senses.

Sense Knowledge cannot find God and would not know God if it found Him.

That’s why the Pharisees, the leaders of the Organized Church of the day, did not recognize their Messiah when He stood right in front of them. They had no ability to understand Spiritual things.

That’s why the Organized Church and its leaders of today cannot believe that God can save ALL mankind, even though there are over 100 Bible texts that confirm this. The Organized Church and its leaders have no ability to understand Spiritual things.

That’s why the Organized Church and its leaders as well as Organized Medicine and its leaders, cannot understand how following God’s Ten Step Natural Health Plan can reverse ALL diseases – even though God has promised to heal ALL our diseases (Psalm 103:3) IF we follow His Laws, His Commandments and His Decrees (Deut 7:11-15). Both groups have NO ability to understand Spiritual things.

They see the world through Sense Knowledge only. They have NO Revelation

Knowledge, the knowledge that can only be obtained if God has truly changed their hearts.

As a culture we spend hundreds of millions of dollars training men's bodies. We have spent uncounted millions in educating their minds, but so little time is spent educating the spiritual nature of man.

You cannot develop faith through the reasoning faculties, no matter how much you try. Faith is born in the human spirit. Fear and courage are both spiritual forces. Joy and peace are not mental attributes. They are spiritual.

The human spirit has given birth to the greatest forces in civilization.

Gal 5:22 "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace. . . "

Fatalism means I am the sport of a force about which I know nothing; Faith is Trust in a God whose ways I **do not know**, but whose Character I **DO know!**

When Jesus said to Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, "Roll away the stone," Martha said, "Lord, he has been in the tomb four days. His body is decaying." Sense Knowledge held Martha.

There will always be a conflict between our Senses and the Word. The Word demands that we walk by faith; the Senses demand that we walk by sight.

Sense Knowledge says: "If you're sick, see a doctor."

Revelation Knowledge says: "If you're sick, that is a sign that something is very wrong in your life. Turn to God and follow HIS natural ways to health. Turn to God and ask Him to show you what you need to change in your life so you can be well." Obviously, the "natural" man, the man who only understands through his Five Senses, believes that approach is "foolishness" as the Bible tells us in 1 Cor 2:14.

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they (spiritual things) are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor 2:14

Walking by faith is simply walking according to the Word. It leads us out of the realm of the Senses into the realm of Revelation Knowledge, into the realm of the Spiritual.

Most Christians have not yet learned to walk by faith. Their minds are still receiving directions for life through the avenues of the Senses. To walk by Faith,

means to walk by the Word of God. It means that one can **see** God. It means that one can **understand** God's character – he can **see** (understand) the “kingdom of God.”

Having Faith means that you believe that God **WILL** do what He has **already promised** He WILL do.

When we are sick, we immediately go to the doctor. Yet God says HE heals all our diseases (Ps 103:1-4). We trust doctors because we can **see** doctors, we can **see** the medicine – the drugs. But Christians cannot trust in the Word because they cannot see God.

Faith says: "God created the human body, so He is the logical Healer." All we need to do is follow God's Plan for Health, HIS Process (Deut 7:11-15) and we will be well.

Man is always seeking independence from God. Sense Knowledge is always trying to push God off the throne, to usurp the place that only God can fill.

Whenever a man thinks that Reason is safer than Revelation, that Reason is better than Revelation, he is stepping out of light into darkness.

It is important to notice the difference between the Wisdom of the apostle Paul and the Wisdom of the unbelieving Greeks.

The Wisdom of Paul was based on an **accepted** belief in God; that is, it does not try to find out whether or not God exists, all its beliefs are based on God, and in the actual whirl of things as they are, all its mental energy is bent on practical living.

The Wisdom of the Greeks, which is the wisdom of our times, is speculative; that is, it is concerned with the origin of things, with the riddle of the universe, etc., consequently the best of our wits is not given to practical living.

The intellectual order of life does not take things as it finds them. It makes us shut our eyes to ACTUAL facts and try to live only in the ideal world. The Wisdom of the Greeks tells us how things **should** be --- there ought to be no sin, no war, no devil, no sickness, no injustice; but these things ARE! It is of no use to ignore them.

Sense Knowledge is manifested in our ACTUAL life. Revelation Knowledge is manifested in our REAL life!

Seeing Life from GOD'S point of view

What is the difference between the ACTUAL life and the REAL life?

Read the story of Joseph (Genesis, Chapters 37-50)

The ACTUAL story shows that Joseph's wicked brothers wanted to kill him but changed their minds and sold him into bondage, thinking and hoping that they would never see him again.

The REAL story is that God was getting Joseph down into Egypt to later protect the beginning group of Israelites as well as ultimately changing the hearts of ALL of Joseph's brothers.

At the conclusion of the episode, Joseph said to his brothers,

"As for you, you thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Gen 50:20

What is the good of Prayer?

What is the good of Prayer? Doesn't God already know what is going on in my life? Doesn't He already know what I need?

We pray in order to see ourselves, our problems, and the problems of other people, from GOD'S perspective rather than from our own. We pray in order to see our life and what is happening to us and others – from God's point of view.

When we see OUR lives and OUR problems from GOD'S perspective, rather than from our own, we have started to progress from the natural, or physical, to the spiritual.

We also pray, of course, to get to know God – up close and personal – as the kind and loving Father that He is. One must spend a lot of time with another person to get to know him well enough to trust him with your life.

There is a "First" and there is a "Second"

In 1 Cor 15:44-49, the apostle Paul explains to us the definitive law of Bible interpretation, which is: The FIRST is always the physical – and the SECOND is always the Spiritual.

"It is sown a natural (soulsh) body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural (soulsh) body, and there is a spiritual body.

And so it is written, 'The first man Adam was made a living soul (a *soul* is a living being that has the Five Senses); the last Adam (Christ) was made a life-giving spirit.

Howbeit that was **not** first which is spiritual, but that which is natural (the spiritual is NEVER first. The natural or physical is always FIRST); and afterward that which is spiritual (the spiritual is always SECOND).

The **first** man (Adam) is of the earth, earthy (made of dust – the natural); the **second** Man is the Lord from heaven (Jesus Christ – the spiritual).
1 Cor 15:44-47

How does this verse pertain to: (a) being "born again," (b) the Second death, (c) Adam vs. Christ, (d) the present earthly Jerusalem vs. the Jerusalem of Revelation?

Read John 3:1-10 about Nicodemus coming to see Jesus at night. How does this passage pertain to: (a) being "born again," (b) the Second death?

How does the Old Testament relate to the New Testament in the areas of Sense Knowledge and Revelation Knowledge?

How does the Old Testament Sanctuary service relate to the Plan of Salvation in the areas of Sense Knowledge and Revelation Knowledge?

There is a FIRST and a SECOND, in ALL of Scripture.

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural (soulish = sensual = can be detected by the five senses); and afterward that which is spiritual." 1 Cor 15:46

The FIRST is the earthy (earthly) or the natural (the soulish, meaning it can be detected with the five senses).

The SECOND is the Spiritual, meaning that it CANNOT be detected by the five senses, but can ONLY be detected by spiritual knowledge, Revelation knowledge, as a result of God putting His disposition in us.

First man = Adam: Earthy or natural

"The first man is of the earth, earthy." 1 Cor 15:47

Second Man = Jesus: Spiritual

"The last Adam was made a quickening (life-giving) spirit." 1 Cor 15:45

"The second Man is the Lord from heaven." 1 Cor 15:47

First birth: Earthy or natural. A natural, physical birth can be detected with the five senses. It can be seen, heard, touched.

Second birth (being born again): Spiritual. A spiritual re-birth **cannot** be detected with the five senses. It is a spiritual phenomenon.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh (physical, earthy, natural): and that which is born of the Spirit (breath) is spirit (breath)." John 3:6

"If I have told you earthly things (things you can understand with your Five Senses), and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? (things that require Revelation knowledge to understand)" John 3:12

"For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being **put to death in the flesh, but quickened (given life) by the Spirit.**"

First death: Earthy or natural - the death that we naturally die - the "death" that is in us from the moment we are born. As soon as we are born we begin dying.

Second death: Spiritual - death to sin, the old man of sin is crucified, we are created a New Creature in Christ.

<u>The First is Natural (Physical)</u> Old Testament	<u>The Second is Spiritual</u> New Testament
Sanctuary in the Wilderness (depicting the Plan of Salvation)	Plan of Salvation
Solomon's (physical) Temple (where the Shekinah glory resided)	Our body is the Temple (where Jesus resides)
Ten Commandments on stone (NO power to keep them)	Ten Commandments written in our heart by God
Literal Israel	Spiritual Israel ("Those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus.)

Let us examine the many different instances of "Firsts" and "Seconds" in the

Bible with the understanding that both Jesus and Paul have given us about Biblical interpretation.

Jesus told Nicodemus that the FIRST (birth) is physical, and the SECOND (birth – being “born again”) is Spiritual. (See John, Chapter 3)

Paul states that the FIRST is **always** physical, and the SECOND is **always** Spiritual. (1 Cor 15:44-49)

Second Death

The Bible speaks of a SECOND Death in Rev 20:6,14. According to both Jesus and Paul, this “death” must be a Spiritual death. And so it is. Paul speaks of this Second “Spiritual Death” many times:

“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” Gal 2:20

“I die daily.” 1 Cor 15:31

“Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:3,4

We are “buried with Him in baptism, wherein also we are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And we being dead in our sins, and the uncircumcision of our flesh, He has made alive (quicken) together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses.” Colossians 2:12,13

The **FIRST death** is the death that is born in us – a **physical** death. A baby begins to “die” the moment it is born. This culminates in our eventual physical death.

The **SECOND death** is a Spiritual death – death to sin.

The FIRST Breath vs the SECOND Breath

God breathed breath into Adam

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.” Genesis 2:7

This is the **FIRST** Breath - **the physical breath** that God breathed into Adam’s nostrils, and Adam became a living soul – meaning that Adam then was alive – and had the Five Senses. God did NOT “put” a soul in Adam. Adam **became** a living soul.

“And when Jesus had said this, **He breathed** on them and said unto them, ‘Receive ye the **Breath** of Holiness (mistranslated “Holy Ghost”). John 2:20

In Acts 17:25, we are told:

“ . . .He gives to all life, and **breath**, and all things.”

In this passage, the word breath is #1457 in Strong’s Concordance *pnoe*, in the Greek, which means **breath**, wind, a breeze, respiration. It is derived from the word *pneuma*, #1451, which means a current of air or **breath**.

The word translated spirit, as in “Holy Spirit” is the same word – *pneuma* in the Greek – which means **breath**, NOT a “ghost.”

The term *Holy Spirit* is a total mistranslation of the words “Breath of holiness” which is the **SECOND** Breath.

God gives us **Physical Breath** to sustain Physical life. That oxygen-containing breath must circulate to every cell in our body to sustain physical life.

God also gives us **Spiritual Breath** – God’s Breath of Holiness – that also must circulate throughout every part of us to sustain Spiritual Life.

The **FIRST** Breath is Physical Breath.

The **SECOND** Breath is Spiritual Breath – God’s Breath of Life.

FIRST Life vs SECOND Life

In the Bible, there are two words in the Greek for Life: *psuche* and *zoe*.

Psuche is used to denote the physical life we live on this earth. But whenever the term *eonian* (**mistranslated** “eternal”) life is used, it is the Greek word *zoe*.

Thus, we have Physical Life – *psuche* – maintained by physical breath – the breath that God breathed into Adam’s nostrils. And we have Spiritual life – *zoe* – the life of Christ in us – *eonian* life – maintained by Spiritual breath, God’s Breath of Holiness (mistranslated “Holy Spirit).

The FIRST Life – physical life is *psuche* in the Greek .

The SECOND Life – Spiritual life – *eonian* life, the life of Christ manifested in us, is *zoe* in the Greek.

Here are Biblical examples of the TWO kinds of life:

Physical life – *psuche* in the Greek:

“Therefore I say unto you, Do not worry about your **life**, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the **life** more than food, and the body more than raiment?” Matthew 6:25

In this passage, Jesus is clearly talking about physical life, and the Greek word used here is *psuche*, #5590 in Strong’s Concordance. It means physical life.

Spiritual life – *eonian* life – *zoe* in the Greek:

“That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have **eternal life**.” (Literal translation = *eonian* life) John 3:15

In this passage, Jesus is clearly talking about Spiritual life, and the Greek word used here is *zoe*, #2222 in Strong’s Concordance. In addition, the word preceding “life” in this passage has been mistranslated “eternal.” The correct translation is *eonian*, #166 in Strong’s Concordance.

Whenever the words “*eonian* life” are used, the *zoe* form of the Greek word *life* is used.

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life (*zoe*) and peace.” Romans 8:6

“And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit (breath) is life (*zoe*) because of righteousness.” Romans 8:10

“For the law of the spirit (breath) of life (*zoe*) in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2

“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (*zoe*). Romans 6:4

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His *life* (*zoe*). Romans 5:10

“But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you: and you killed the Prince (author) of life (*zoe*) whom God has raised from the dead. . .” Acts 3:15

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life (*zoe*) also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” 2 Cor 4:10

“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life (*zoe*) also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” 2 Cor 5:11

These texts clearly show that the *zoe* form of the word in Greek pertains to a Spiritual life – NOT the physical life, which is the Greek word *psuche*.

Therefore, when the Greek word *zoe* is used in connection with the word *eonian* – mistranslated “eternal” – it is not referring to a physical life that will last forever, but the Spiritual life of Christ abiding in us.

Physically living forever is spoken of in 1 Cor 15:26, 28 where we are told that “**death will be abolished** . . . and God will be All in All.” If death is abolished, then everyone will be alive – and God will then be All in All. That is Universal Restoration!

FIRST fire vs SECOND fire

In the Old Testament, Sodom and Gomorrah were literally burned up with physical FIRE because of their wickedness.

In the New Testament, **fire** is Spiritual. The Bible speaks of “**fiery** trials that will try us.” (1 Peter 4:12)

How Can We Determine When the Word "FIRE" is Literal or Spiritual?

Literal FIRE:

There are times, particularly in the Old Testament, where *fire* means literal fire.

But it is a physical illustration of physical cleansing. Many times in the New Testament, the word fire is used to represent cleansing from sin – Spiritual cleansing.

Here are some literal uses of the word *fire*:

The boy with demons fell into the fire

Peter warmed himself by the fire

Jesus placed the fish on a fire of coals

Paul laid sticks on the fire, and a viper came out

Elijah called for fire from heaven - Old Testament

Fire and brimstone destroyed Sodom - Old Testament

Quench the power of fire

Fire in the "burning bush" -- but the bush didn't burn!

These, we all agree, are examples of Literal FIRE.

In the Old Testament, the word "FIRE" is used many times, and almost always it is a literal FIRE. Fire in the Old Testament was used in a literal way (literal fire cleanses because nothing is left) to illustrate Spiritual FIRE in the New Testament (the elimination of the sin in our life as we go through **fiery** trials), just as the Israelites literal journey through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land illustrates our present Spiritual journey through life, coming out of sin (Egypt) and going to the Promised Land.

The Literal Temple in the Old Testament, symbolizes our "Bodies as the Temple" in the New Testament, a Spiritualization of the Old Testament Temple.

The Old Testament is, in general, the physical or literal example, and the New Testament is, in general, the Spiritualization of that Old Testament literal example. This can be shown repeatedly.

Examples of Spiritual *FIRE*

1) How is God described in the Bible?

"God is a consuming FIRE." Heb 12:28,29

God's eyes are as a flaming FIRE. Rev 1:14

The mighty angel's feet are as pillars of FIRE. Rev 10:1,2

The lamps of FIRE burning before the throne are the seven Spirits of God. Rev 4:3-5

So God is described as FIRE. Clearly this is symbolic FIRE, NOT literal.

2) How are God's angels (ministers) described?

God's ministers are a flame of FIRE. Heb 1:5-7

3) What did Jesus come to cast on the earth?

"I came to cast FIRE on the earth." Luke 12:49

4) What are we told our lives will be full of?

We will be "baptized with FIRE." Matt 3:10-12, Luke 3: 16,17

"Everyone shall be salted with FIRE." Mark 9:49

"FIRE will test each one's work... 1 Cor 3:13

". . . he shall be saved, yet thus, as through FIRE." 1 Cor 3:15

We will go through "FIERY trials." 1 Peter 4:12

". . . heap coals of FIRE on his head." Rev 12:20

". . . gold tried in the FIRE." Rev 3:18

". . . trial of your faith . . . tried with FIRE." 1 Peter 1:7

"But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a Refiner's **FIRE**, and like a washerman's soap: And He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness (right-doing)." Malachi 3:2,3

5. The SIN Offering at the Sanctuary

When the Israelites brought a lamb to the temple, they placed their hands on the head of the lamb and symbolically transferred their own sins to the lamb. Then the lamb was burned up as a sacrifice – NOT the Israelite! The sin had been transferred to the lamb, and the “sin” was burned up – NOT the Israelite.

6. The young men in the fiery furnace

When Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar because they refused to bow down to the idol (Daniel Chapter 3), their ropes (signifying the bondage of sin) were burned off by the fire, but they were completely untouched by the fire. This tells us that the SIN (the ropes of sin that hold us in bondage) will be burned out of our life by the fiery trials (Spiritual *fire*) we go through on this earth, but WE will NOT be burned up.

God is described as FIRE.

Jesus said He came to cast FIRE on the earth.

And our whole lives here on earth are filled with FIRE – fiery trials – the FIRE that purifies the sin out of our life.

Everyone understands that this fire is NOT literal FIRE. It is Spiritual Fire.

But the FIRE that occurs at the Judgment is incorrectly interpreted by virtually ALL Christians as being literal FIRE!

Why is this so?

It is interpreted this way because of the preconceived theological beliefs of those who teach it. It has NO Biblical basis.

The FIRE at the Judgment is the “Second” fire. It cleanses from sin, just as the **fiery** trials we are going through now are cleansing us from sin.

FIRE purifies and cleanses, but the GOLD REMAINS!

God is Love. God is Truth. God is FIRE. God eliminates sin.

God is the FIRE that cleanses from sin

When Jesus was passing through Samaria and the Samaritans did not

want Him there, His disciples asked Jesus, “Should we bring fire down from heaven to destroy them, as Elijah did?” Jesus responded, "You don't know what Spirit you are of (clearly Satan's spirit). I came NOT to destroy men's lives, but to SAVE them!" Luke 9:56

In essence, Jesus was saying, “I came NOT to burn people up. I came to burn the sin out of their lives – and SAVE them.”

Rules of Biblical Interpretation

It is plain to see that this specific Biblical rule of interpretation, namely that the FIRST is always Physical and the SECOND is always Spiritual, **is a rule given by both Jesus and Paul**, is the key to understanding the Bible.

However, this rule is obviously NOT understood by pastors, seminary theologians, nor by the translators of the Bible – both hundreds of years ago and today. In fact, these mistranslations and misinterpretations because of a total lack of understanding of this rule of interpretation are responsible for **a number of the major FALSE DOCTRINES embraced by the Organized Church of today, including the following False Doctrines:**

1. Literal Burning Hellfire: There is NO burning Hellfire!
2. Eternal life - - should be *Eonian* life – the life of Christ in us – NOT the idea of living forever. (Although we **will** have what we know as eternal life AFTER God has put *eonian* life in us. But that is spoken of only in 1 Cor 15:22-28)
3. Immortality of the soul: The “spirit” does NOT “return to God.” When a person dies, his “breath” returns to God who gave it. (The word “breath” has been incorrectly translated as “spirit.” Eccl. 12:7)

This does NOT mean that the “breath” as an entity goes wafting off to heaven. It means only that God gives us breath – which gives us life. And when we are no longer breathing, we are no longer alive. The breath “returns to God” figuratively, because He is the only One who can give life. When we no longer have breath, we are dead and we know nothing.

When a lamp is turned off, where does the “light” go? It goes nowhere. It just ceases to exist. When a person dies, the same thing happens to the “breath” of that person. It just ceases to exist.

The soul is NOT immortal. Human beings do NOT have immortality, only God does. (1 Timothy 6:15,16)

4. Old (FIRST) Covenant vs New (SECOND) Covenant – the LAW (the Ten Commandments) were supposedly “done away with at the Cross.” But that is incorrect. The FIRST Covenant is the Ten Commandments written physically on stone by God. The SECOND Covenant is God Spiritually putting His law – His character – His disposition - into our heart and mind so we become like Him. (Hebrews 8:8-10)
5. The Trinity: The doctrine that the “Holy Spirit” is a person – the supposed third person of the Trinity. The words “Holy Spirit” are an improper translation of the term “breath of holiness” - meaning God infusing us with HIS disposition – His character - His “breath of holiness” so we will eventually become like Him.
6. Being “born again” – or more correctly, being “born from above.” To be “born again” does NOT mean that one is just converted, as is the case with the majority of Christians. It means that God had rejuvenated that person – changed him to be like Christ. God has given him a new nature, the nature of Christ, rather than the nature of sin.
7. The Second Death does not mean permanent annihilation. It means that one has “died to sin” and has become a “new Creature in Christ.”

What does it mean to be Regenerated?

Regeneration is synonymous with *sanctification*, which means to be **made holy!**

Is it possible to become Perfect? God says it is.

“You SHALL be Perfect, as your Father in heaven is Perfect.” (Matt 5:48)
(Literal translation)

Pastors, almost to a man (or woman), will preach that, “No one is perfect.” And that “No one will ever be perfect on this earth.”

But that is not Biblical. In fact, that is heresy.

All these same pastors believe that people WILL be perfect in heaven. So, if they don’t become perfect on this earth, how do they become perfect? The answer that is given is that in some miraculous way – AFTER one dies – he magically becomes “perfect.” Apparently God changes the person’s character as his “spirit” wafts off to heaven.

But then, what is **this** life for? Why do we have to live through the trials and troubles of **this** life, that God, Himself, tells us will build our character. (Romans 5:3-5) Why doesn't God just wave the "magic wand" when we are children – or when we become an adult – so then we will automatically, and painlessly, become "perfect"?

Christians want a "Quick Fix" in Spiritual matters (just like they want a "Quick Fix" - drug medications - in Physical Health matters). They want Spiritual perfection without the hard work – without the painful changing of habits – without the drudgery of life – all of which build character.

How is Regeneration Accomplished?

Regeneration is the work of the Lord. He puts HIS life in us, slowly, moment by moment, day by day, as we learn to know Him, as we learn to trust Him, as we understand our need for Him to run our life, as we "behold Him." By **beholding** Jesus Christ – we are, one day at a time, changed into His image.

"But we all, with unveiled face **beholding** as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed (transformed) into the same image from glory to glory (one step at a time), even as by the Spirit (breath) of the Lord (God's breath of holiness)." 2 Cor 3:18

Sin is a fundamental relationship – it is not wrong *doing*, but wrong *being* – it is deliberate and determined independence from God. It is asserting that we have Free Will, and that God CANNOT save us unless we let him. It is my claim to my right to myself. In order to be regenerated, we must give up our right to ourselves and give it over to God.

Are we willing to be battered into the shape of what God wants us to be? The beatings will always come in the most common everyday ways and through common, everyday people, in the drudgery of life. That is why Jesus said,

"In this world, you SHALL have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33

When we finally have had enough serious, crushing, trouble to recognize that we do not have the wisdom to run our own life, when we finally understand that we need Jesus Christ to run our life completely, only then will regeneration take place in our life.

We must learn to trust God for everything.

A man cannot redeem himself – redemption is the work of God, and is absolutely finished and complete. Its application in individual people is a matter of when they finally understand their absolute need for Christ to be their All in All – to make every decision in their life.

When that occurs, then:

1, God puts HIS mind in us.

“Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:5

2. God lives in us, and we must take care of our body – His temple.

“If any man defiles (destroys) the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” 1 Cor 3:17

3. God runs everything in our life. God works in us, both to have the “will” and to be able to “do” His good pleasure.

“For it is God that works in you **both to will and to do** according to His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13

4. Christ lives in us.

“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.: Galatians 2:21

5. God puts a measure of faith in us, and He will finish the work He has started.

“God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. . .” Romans 12:3

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6

6. God puts His Law in our heart and in our mind, so we will eventually have NO tendency to sin.

“I will put my law in their mind, and write them in their hearts. . .” Hebrews 8:11

7. God **owns** us. He bought us by His death on the Cross.

“If any man defiles (destroys) the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, **which temple ye are.**” 1 Cor 3:17

“For you are **bought with a price**: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit (breath) which are God’s.” 1 Cor 6:20

8. God directs ALL our steps. We just “walk in those steps.”

“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is NOT in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jeremiah 10:23

“Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus. . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ. . .” Hebrews 13:20,21

9. God is in charge of EVERYTHING

“. . . who works ALL things after the counsel of His OWN will.”
Ephesians 1:11

10. God eventually will make every person Perfect.

“You SHALL be Perfect, even as your Father in heaven is Perfect.”
(Matt 5:48) Literal translation.

““. . . our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall confirm you unto the end, that you may be **blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor 1:7,8

11. After making everyone Perfect – through the trials and tribulations that we encounter in this world – **God eventually will save everyone.**

“God is the Savior of **ALL** mankind. . .” 1 Tim 4:10

God allows us to make our own decisions. God allows us to *think* that we have Free Will. But God is in charge of ALL the circumstances of our life – we are not.

When we make bad decisions, we bring trouble on ourselves, and we reap what we have sown. When we eventually have had enough trouble, and there is no place else to turn – we turn to God. That may happen in this life, or it may happen at the Judgment – after the Second Resurrection. But it will happen!

Then everyone, after they have reaped what they have sown, will worship Christ as their King.

“At the name of Jesus **every** knee will bow. . . and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, **to the glory of God** the Father.”
Philippians 2:10,11

The only thing **we** must do in all this, is to come to the Lord every day in Bible study and prayer, with a pure and contrite heart, **willing to obey everything we learn, and understanding how much we need the Lord.** The Lord will do ALL the rest. We will become like Him.

How do I Know if I have been Regenerated?

- 1) Jesus has become the center of my life. I look to Him, rather than to my husband, wife, children, friends, doctors, ministers, or others, for the answers to my problems.
- 2) I WANT to spend time with Him EVERY DAY in Bible study and prayer
- 3) I seek out and enjoy studying the Bible with others who are also looking for truth.
- 4) I will never say, "Is this information necessary for my salvation?" because I will want to know EVERYTHING I can about Jesus. "To KNOW God is life eternal (*eonian* life – the life of Christ in me)." (John 17:3)
- 5) The salvation of all the other people in the world will be as important to me as my own.
- 6) I would be a Christian even if there were no eternal life or hell.
- 7) I realize that the major issue in life is not MY salvation, but the issue is **God's** reputation and character. Am I representing HIM properly?
- 8) I will delight in keeping God's commandments, not because of any possible punishment or reward, but because I love Jesus, and I know that His ways are always right. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep my commandments." John 14:15
- 9) I will give up my right to myself and give it over to God, letting Him make all my decisions for me instead of revering the "wisdom" of man, because Jesus owns me. He bought me with a price - His death on the Cross.

Conversion means knowing about God.

Regeneration means **knowing God** – personally and up-close, and having Jesus Christ living in you so you will exhibit His character – rather than your own.

When one is truly **regenerated by God** – he becomes a **new creation** in Christ.

“And He that sat upon the throne said, **Behold, I make ALL new**. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are **true** and faithful.” Revelation 21:5

It is not that a person “tries” to keep the Ten Commandments. When Jesus has replaced your own disposition with HIS disposition, you will have NO inclination to sin, no inclination to break any of the Ten Commandments. Sin, of any kind, will no longer be attractive to you. You will automatically keep the Ten Commandments because that will be your character, because Christ is living in you.

My little children, of whom I labour in birth again **until Christ be formed in you.** Galatians 4:19

Therefore you will NOT be “under the Law” because the law will have no authority over you. Your disposition will be such that you will **automatically KEEP the law** – God’s Ten Commandments – which are a transcript of God’s character.

A loving mother does **not** have to be restrained from killing her child. That thought would never even enter her mind. She doesn’t need someone to remind her **not** to kill her child, or to command her **not** to kill her child. She has no inclination to do such a thing. The law that says “Thou shalt not kill” has NO authority over her, because she is keeping it automatically. It is her nature to keep it. Therefore, she is NOT “under the law.” The law has no authority over her because her character is such that she is automatically **keeping** the law.

Eventually, when Jesus Christ takes over our life completely, when we give up our right to ourselves and give it over to Him, He will be making every decision in our life. Then ALL our decisions will be Perfect. We will exhibit the character of Jesus Christ, who says:

“You SHALL be Perfect, even as your Father in heaven is Perfect.”
Matt 5:48 (Literal translation)