

I Thessalonians 4:7–13

I Thessalonians 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

WHILE it is true Christians are called to liberty,¹ they are also called to holiness. Thus, it is a great distortion to infer that Christ gives² anyone the right to sin—that grace covers a carnal and sensual life, and that holiness is not needed to be pursued; and men can be saved without it. This is of course not true, since God has declared that without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord* (Heb. 12:14).

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Heb. 12:14) *no man shall see the Lord*—no man as a son; in heavenly glory (Re 22:3, 4).³ In the East, none but the greatest favorites are admitted to the honor of seeing the king (compare 2Sa 14:24).⁴ The Lord being pure and holy, none but the pure and holy shall see Him (Mt 5:8).⁵ Without holiness in them, they could not enjoy Him who is holiness itself (Zec 14:20).⁶ The connection of purity with seeing the Lord, appears in 1Jo 3:2, 3; Eph 5:5.⁷ Contrast Heb 12:16⁸ (compare 1 Th 4:3).⁹ In Mt 24:30; Re 1:7,¹⁰ it is said that all shall see the Lord; but, that shall be as a Judge, not as their lasting portion and God, which is meant here. The Greek verb does not denote the mere action of seeing, but the seer's state of mind to which the object is presented: so in Mt 5:8 they shall truly comprehend God [Tittmann]. None but the holy could appre-

1 Rom. 8:21 *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

II Cor. 3:17 *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

Gal. 5:1 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

Gal. 5:13 *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*

2 John 8:36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

Rom. 8:2 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

3 Rev. 22:3–4 *And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: ⁴And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

4 II Sam. 14:24 *And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.*

5 Matt. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

6 Zec. 14:20 *In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.*

7 I John 3:2–3 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. ³And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Eph. 5:5 *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

8 Heb. 12:16 *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

9 I Thess. 4:3 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*

10 Matt. 24:30 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Rev. 1:7 *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

ciate the holy God, none else therefore shall abide in His presence.

It is a great perversion of the truth, where Christ's redemptive work is used as a spiritual excuse by sinners, to remain living in uncleanliness. *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another* (Gal. 5:13).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Gal. 5:13) *An occasion to the flesh.*—Do not, under the name “liberty,” give way to sensual excesses.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Gal. 5:13) *Only use not liberty.* . . . The idea is, “You are called to liberty, but it is not liberty for an occasion to the flesh. It is not freedom from virtuous restraints, and from the laws of God. It is liberty from the servitude of sin, and religious rites and ceremonies, not freedom from the necessary restraints of virtue.” It was necessary to give this caution, because:

(1) There was a strong tendency in all converts from paganism to relapse again into their former habits. Licentiousness abounded, and where they had been addicted to it before their conversion, and where they were surrounded by it on every hand, they were in constant danger of falling into it again. A bare and naked declaration, therefore, that they had been called to liberty, to freedom from restraint, might have been misunderstood, and some might have supposed that they were free from all restraints.

(2) it is needful to guard the doctrine from abuse at all times. There has been a strong tendency, as the history of the church has shown, to abuse the doctrine of grace. The doctrine that Christians are “free;” that there is liberty to them from restraint, has been perverted always by Antinomians, and been made the occasion of their indulging freely in sin. And the result has shown that nothing was more important than to guard the

doctrine of Christian liberty, and to show exactly what Christians are freed from, and what laws are still binding on them. Paul is, therefore, at great pains to show that the doctrines which he had maintained did not lead to licentiousness, and did not allow the indulgence of sinful and corrupt passions.

I Thessalonians 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

No one can spurn God's spiritual command that His people should be holy,¹¹ without at the same time showing contempt for the Lord Himself. The Greek word for *despise* is *atheteó*, “to do away with what has been laid down, set aside.” Its usage is “I annul, make of no effect, set aside, ignore, slight; I break faith with.”¹² If a man sets aside that which has its origin in God, then he both ignores and sets aside God Himself. Consequently, no man should think that he can *set aside, ignore, and make of no effect* God's commandments, and not in the process despise the Lord Who sent them. This is undoubtedly true in regards to abstaining from sexual immorality.

I Thessalonians 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

The apostle transitions from one of the strongest desires of the flesh, fornication, to the strongest evidence of the Spirit: love. Here Paul again takes up the importance of pursuing love. God had taught the Thessalonians to love, and the fact that they possessed it proved their obedience to the gospel. Because God had inspired these early Christians to love, it became unnecessary for Paul to teach it again. Instead, he encouraged them to increase in manifesting this divine and holy fruit in their lives.

11 I Pet. 1:16 *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

12 *Strong's Concordance*, #114

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(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Thess. 4:9) *Ye need not.*—A sweet rhetorical figure, by which men are encouraged to the performance of a duty in which they are not perfect, by the praising of their imperfect attempts: a specimen of that “courtesy” which is a part of “brotherly love.”

There is no greater evidence that men and women have been taught by God than when love manifests itself in their lives. By *love* Jesus said men would know who were His true disciples,¹³ and by *love* we can know if a man has passed from death unto life.¹⁴ Love is therefore one of the great indicators of true Christianity, and if a man does not possess God's love, he should not assume himself Christian at all. By abiding in God's love, believers are assured that they are no longer born simply of this world but have now passed from death unto life. Love is also that divine quality that proves a man genuinely knows God and has had personal contact and relationship with Him. *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God* (I John 4:7). The contrast to holding sincere and genuine love for God and His people, is when men love the world, which is ultimately connected to a love of self. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him* (I John 2:15).

(*Benson Commentary*, I John 2:15) *If any man love the world*—Esteem, desire, or pursue it, or any thing in it, inordinately, so as to place his happiness in the enjoyment of it; *the love of the Father is not in him . . .*

Practically, love for the world and love for God cannot coexist. If the world is loved,

God will not be. If God is embraced and cherished, the world cannot be. Thus, for every man there will be one great choice in his life: will he love a holy God, or will he love a carnal and fleshly world, completely contrary to Him?

I Thessalonians 4:10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

The exhortation by the apostle to the Thessalonians is that though they had been taught of God to love, still they were to seek to increase in it more. Love is such a high spiritual quality that there always remains opportunity to grow in it more. The more believers also are led by God's holy and divine Spirit, the more they will practically manifest divine love in their lives.

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, I Thess. 4:10) Neither love, nor any other grace, is made perfect at once; even those that are taught of God.

To pursue love and seek to increase in it, is to pursue the very nature that God is.¹⁵ No sincere Christian also could properly say that he has loved to the great extent that Jesus Christ has commanded all Christians to love, which is as He loved.¹⁶

I Thessalonians 4:11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

God's will for those saved by Him is to study to be quiet and do their own business. Meddling in others' affairs is the complete opposite of love. There is

13 *John 13:35* *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

14 *I John 3:14* *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

15 *I John 4:7* *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

16 *John 13:34* *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

enough spiritual improvement that needs done in our own lives without adding on excessive time given to discover and point out the perceived faults in others. There is also enough lack in our own faith without looking for deficiencies in others. Thus, to truly pursue God's love, meddling,¹⁷ quarreling, and being a busy body¹⁸ should be, and must be, avoided. Not doing this reveals not the faults of others but rather only that fault which lies within ourselves. For he who looks for and seeks to expose sins in other men, actually reveals that he walks carnally himself. To also be overly consumed with other men's shortcomings, or at least perceived ones, reveals that we think ourselves free from any. Thus, for the true Christian, life should consist of seeking to live a quiet and peaceful life wherein the main emphasis is doing one's own business and working with one's own hands, and therefore not meddling in the business and affairs of others.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I Thess. 4:11) *study to be quiet*—Greek, “make it your ambition to be quiet, and to do your own business.” In direct contrast to the world's ambition, which is, “to make a great stir,” and “to be busybodies” . . .

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Thess. 4:11) *Do your own business.*—Not merely was each individual to do his own work, but the whole Church was to refrain from interfering ostentatiously with other Churches.

I Thessalonians 4:12 *That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.*

When believers tend to their own affairs and work with their own hands, and walk honestly toward those who are without, God's promise is, that they will live without lack. Hence, by pursuing love, focusing on our own spiritual growth, and living respectfully with other men, the Lord's promise is that we will suffer no lack in our own life. Instructing us that how people conduct themselves among their fellow men, both in and outside of the church, will greatly affect how God cares for them.

I Thessalonians 4:13 *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

But I would not have you to be ignorant. The Bible speaks of many things of which men can be ignorant: the Lord's righteousness,¹⁹ the mystery of Israel's rejection until God's appointed time for their restoration,²⁰ the reality that many are called but few are chosen,²¹ the gifts of the Spirit,²² Satan's devices,²³ and here, God's glorious *hope*. The language Paul uses in his instruction to the Thessalonians, that they should *sorrow not, even as others which have no hope*, is strong so that his point may be made perfectly clear, that the future of an unsaved man is vastly different than that of a saved one.

17 Prov. 20:3 *It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.*

18 I Tim. 5:13 *And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.*

19 Rom. 10:3 *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

20 Rom. 11:25 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*

21 I Cor. 10:1–5 *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ²And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³And did all eat the same spiritual meat; ⁴And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. ⁵But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*

22 I Cor. 12:1 *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.*

23 II Cor. 2:11 *Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

The Dead Shall Rise

For Christians there is realistic, sure, and promised hope after death, but for those who have no true relationship with the Son of God, there is nothing of the sort. This truth was evidenced when the two thieves were crucified with Jesus on the cross, and one was saved, but the other was not.²⁴ Hence, two men can die at the very same time, at the very same place, and in the exact same manner, yet explicitly have two totally different futures. For this reason Christians should not grieve as do non-Christians, to whom natural death brings much sorrow, which cannot be avoided. This is because for those who have true sincere relationship and connection to God's second Adam, Jesus Christ, now possess His eternal life. For Christians, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Therefore, if a man has Christ in him,²⁵ though his physical body is destined for death because of sin,²⁶ his spirit will live because of righteousness. Because the Spirit is of God²⁷ and because the Spirit is after God,²⁸ then it will live beyond the death of the body. Hence, if the Spirit of God lives within us, God's life will forever manifest itself through us. And just as the body is dead because of sin, so is the Spirit life because of righ-

teousness. *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness* (Rom. 8:10).

(Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:10–11) *And if Christ be in you*—Namely, by his Spirit dwelling in you: where the Spirit of Christ is, there is Christ: *the body is dead*—ΤΟ ΜΕΝ ΣΩΜΑ ΝΕΚΡΟΝ, *the body indeed is dead*, devoted to death; for our belonging to Christ, or having Christ in us, does not exempt the body from undergoing the sentence of death passed on all mankind; *because of sin*—Heretofore committed; especially the sin of Adam, by which death entered into the world, and the sinful nature derived from him; *but the Spirit is life*—The soul is quickened and made alive to God; and shall, after the death of the body, continue living, active, and happy;

Whether or not a man's soul continues to live after his physical body dies rests upon whether or not he possesses the Spirit of righteousness. It is this righteous Holy Spirit that provides for eternal life, without which men can expect only death. Thus though the natural body must return to the dust²⁹ from which it was made,³⁰ the spirit is said to return to God, because its source is God.³¹ Each world, the natural and the spiritual, consists of two completely different materials. Because of this, the natural body, whether alive

24 Luke 23:39–43 *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* ⁴⁰*But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?* ⁴¹*And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.* ⁴²*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* ⁴³*And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

25 Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

26 Heb. 9:27 *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

27 Jdg. 3:10 *And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.*

Jdg. 6:34 *But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.*

II Sam. 23:2 *The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*

28 Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

29 Gen. 3:19 *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Eccl. 3:20 *All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*

30 Gen. 2:7 *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.*

31 Eccl. 12:7 *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

or dead, cannot without transformation³² enter the higher spiritual realm, which is God's habitation. For this reason, to save a man from death, Christ must impart to him a new spiritual nature that is suited for habitation in the heavens—a nature higher than that fleshly nature passed on from Adam. *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* (I Cor. 15:22) The contrasting forms of life, both natural and spiritual, are detailed in the book of First Corinthians.

I Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

From the first Adam sinners have derived their natural, physical, and carnal nature. From the last Adam, Jesus Christ, God has made it available to possess a new holy and spiritual nature, which gives hope of eternal life. This life is not natural; rather, it is spiritual and descends from above. Its source is God; its sender is the Son of God.³³ Those of the *last Adam*, who have been born again, or born from above,³⁴ are made living spirits by Christ. Thus,

just as the first Adam genetically passed natural life to his progeny, so does Jesus Christ, the second Adam, impart eternal and spiritual life³⁵ to His descendants.³⁶ The nature derived from Adam was purposed for soul life, purposed for the earth and earthly habitation. The eternal nature made available through God's second Adam, Jesus Christ, is spiritual and purposed for heavenly habitation. Thus, just as Adam was made a living soul at his creation, so was Christ revealed to be living Spirit after His resurrection.³⁷ Hence, the heavenly nature that Jesus Christ imparts to those born of God, through faith in Himself, is the same spiritual life that animated Christ's own body at His resurrection.

(*Benson Commentary*, I Cor. 15:45) Christ is called Adam, because believers receive their sanctified, spiritual nature, and their immortal bodies, from him, (see Ephesians 5:32.)³⁸ just as mankind have derived their corrupted nature and mortal bodies from the first Adam.

I Corinthians 15:46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which

32 I Cor. 15:48 *As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

33 Luke 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

John 14:16–17 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

34 I Pet. 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

John 3:3 *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.*

35 John 10:28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

John 5:21 *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

36 Heb. 2:13 *And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*

37 I Cor. 15:45 *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*

38 Eph. 5:32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

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is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

Adam's creation by God was a natural one. All the elements used in Adam's bodily formation came from this world and the natural realm. Adam was the first of an earthly race of men who would populate and expand over a physical and organic world. The Lord prepared a bountiful earthly garden for Adam's residence,³⁹ which He purposed for his blessing and sustained physical life. Hence, just as Adam was the first of all born of the flesh, so is Jesus Christ the spiritual first, and Head of all those born of the Spirit.⁴⁰

I Corinthians 15:47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.

Adam's body was comprised of the earth, from the dust and matter that made it up;⁴¹ in contrast, the second Adam, Jesus Christ's origination, is said to be from above and from the higher spiritual realm of heaven.⁴² Jesus' words to the Pharisees who did not believe He was the Son of

God reveal the great gulf that lies between the natural realm and the higher spiritual realm. *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world* (John 8:21–23). The reason Jesus said that those who did not believe on Him could not go where He was soon to depart to, was because their only life was from below, thus of the earth. They were natural in origin, and as such they were not suited for eternal and heavenly habitation. This is true for all those born merely of flesh and blood. For he who is born only of the flesh, is unable, and will be restricted from entering the kingdom of God.⁴³ This is why that it is not until a man is born again,⁴⁴ born of the Spirit⁴⁵ and born from above, that there exists true hope for entering into heaven. Since Jesus instructed Nicodemus that for a man to enter the higher, holy and spiritual realm of God, he must first be born again,⁴⁶ that

39 *Gen. 2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

Gen. 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

40 *Eph. 1:22-23 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,* ²³*Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*

Eph. 4:15-16 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: ¹⁶*From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Col. 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

41 *Gen. 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

42 *John 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

John 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

43 *I Cor. 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

44 *John 3:3 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.*

John 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

45 *John 3:5-6 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. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

46 *I Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

is, born of the Spirit, and born of the actual holy and divine nature that God is.⁴⁷ *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 (John 3:3).*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 3:3) *Except a man*—This is a universal form of expression designed to include all mankind. Of “each and every man” it is certain that unless he is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. It includes, therefore, men of every character and rank, and nation, moral and immoral, rich and poor, in office and out of office, old and young, bond and free, the slave and his master, Jew and Gentile. It is clear that our Saviour intended to convey to Nicodemus the idea, also, that “he” must be born again. It was not sufficient to be a Jew, or to acknowledge him to be a teacher sent by God that is, the Messiah; it was necessary, in addition to this, to experience in his own soul that great change called the “new birth” or regeneration. ...

The kingdom of God—Either in this world or in that which is to come—that is, heaven. See the notes at Matthew 3:2.⁴⁸ The meaning is, that the kingdom which Jesus was about to set up was so pure and holy that it was indispensable that every man should experience this change, or he could not partake of its blessings. This is solemnly declared by the Son of God by an affirmation equivalent to an oath, and there can be no possibility, therefore, of entering heaven without experiencing the change which the Saviour contemplated by the “new birth.”

I Corinthians 15:48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

Just as believers must share in the weakness, deficiencies, and death of the first man, Adam, likewise they are promised to share just as equally in the glory of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.⁴⁹ The connection to the second Adam, Jesus Christ, is not less than the connection to the first man, Adam. Therefore, just as certainly as men must physically die because of their relationship to the first man, so too does the same certainty exist of believers sharing eternal life with Jesus Christ, God's second Adam.

I Corinthians 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

In all ways, those born of the first Adam have been made to share in his fleshly image and earthly destiny. Equally true, and just as certain, is that those born of God's second Adam, Jesus Christ, will share in His heavenly image and eternal destiny.

The Greek word for *image* is *eikōn*. The word means not merely “resembles” but rather a “replication.”

(HELPS Word-studies, #1504) *eikōn* (from 1503 *leikō*, “be like”)—properly, “mirror-like representation,” referring to what is very close in resemblance (like a “high-definition” projection, as defined by the context). Image (1504 *eikōn*) then exactly reflects its source (what it directly corresponds to). For example, Christ is the very image (1504 *eikōn*, supreme expression) of the Godhead (see 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15⁵⁰).

“1504 (*eikōn*) assumes a prototype, of which it not merely resembles, but from which it is drawn” (R. Trench). 1504 (*eikōn*) then is more than a “shadow”; rather it is a repli-

47 John 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

48 Matt. 3:2 *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

49 Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

50 II Cor 4:4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Col 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

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cation (F. F. Bruce, Hebrews, 226; see also Lightfoot at Col 3:10 and 2:21).

Natural men are the same as their forefather, earthly Adam, not only on the outside but also in their inner being, where sin lives.⁵¹ What natural and earthly Adam was, those born of him share in completeness and totality. This same principle also holds true if a man is born again through Christ. Because Christ is a living Spirit and has life within Himself, He passes a portion of that which He is⁵² to those who believe upon Him. This will

eventually end in being transformed into the same image as the Savior. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* (1 John 3:2) For those then born of God through the Savior, God's promise is that they shall one day be made to share in Christ's own holy image. Because they have been given the nature of Christ, there is now hope of one day being transformed into Christ's own heavenly image.

51 *Eccl. 9:3 This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.*

Jer. 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Matt. 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

52 *II Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*