

Be Not Deceived

By Pastor Art Watkins

Part Two

Suffering

There are Christians who are deceived into believing that any suffering they endure in this life will be rewarded. When they read about the rewards given to those who suffer they assume it's all suffering without exception and distinction. But, what saith the scriptures? The scriptures tell us that all suffering will not be rewarded.

*Suffering you experience for sin, carnality and carelessness will not be rewarded. Sin pays wages to those who serve sin and the wages are always bad. God does not reward the wages you receive by serving sin.

*Suffering chastisement for sin will not be rewarded. When Christians will not be corrected by the word of God or the Spirit of God, God will apply *the board of education to the seat of learning*. God chastened the saints in Corinth with weakness, sickness and even death for their sins. God does not reward that kind of suffering.

*Suffering pain, disease, and sickness because of carnal habits such as smoking, drinking, or gluttony will not be rewarded. There are Christians who smoke and drink and over eat and they suffer physically for it in this life. Some even die of cancer and heart disease because of their bad habits. Don't think for one second God will reward this suffering.

*If people dislike you or speak against you because you have a rotten personality, don't expect a crown for that. There are some preachers I have known who are religious bullies. They use the pen and the microphone to attack other Christians and other preachers and when these people stand up and defend themselves, these coward bullies develop a martyrs complex and tell people they are *suffering for Jesus*. They are not suffering for Jesus. They are suffering for being a religious bully.

*If people avoid you or refuse to listen to you because you are a hypocrite don't expect a reward for that.

The only suffering God will reward at the judgment seat of Christ is suffering for Christ's sake in this life.

2 Timothy 2:8-12 says: ***Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.***

In the context in which it appears, the suffering God rewards is physical suffering for Christ sake like those Paul describes in these verses.

In the next chapter in verses 10-12 he also wrote these words about suffering: ***But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.***

These verses like many others make it clear that God does not reward all suffering without exception. The suffering he rewards is suffering for the sake of Christ and living godly in Christ Jesus in this life. If we suffer for Christ, we will reign with Christ. If we do not suffer, we will not reign with him. All Christians will live with Christ in the kingdom of God according to 2 Timothy 2:11 because all believers are dead with Christ, but only those who suffer for Christ will also reign with Christ according to verse 12.

Romans 8:16-18: ***The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.***

These verses say that if we are children of God, we are heirs of God. We become children of God by faith alone in the gospel; therefore all believers are heirs of God. But it also says we become joint-heirs with Christ IF so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together. And it says any suffering we endure for Christ in this life will be worth it compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Becoming a joint heir of Christ is conditional upon suffering for Christ in this life. A joint heir of Christ is someone who will share his throne and reign with him in the coming kingdom of God.

In Revelation 2:26-27 Jesus said: ***And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.***

In Revelation 3:21 he also said: ***To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.***

In the coming kingdom of God Jesus Christ will share his throne with those who overcome as he overcame in this life. In his life on earth Jesus overcame tribulation and suffering and those who do the same will become joint heirs with Christ; he said: ***To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.***

But notice it's those who overcome as he overcame who will sit with him in his throne. And in Romans 8 it is those who suffer for Christ who will be joint heirs with Christ.

Be not deceived by all suffering: God will not reward all suffering in general; it's suffering for the sake of Christ in this life he will reward.

Second Birth

In John 3:3 Jesus said: ***Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*** In verses 5-6 he said: ***Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.***

There are many religious people who are deceived about the water in John 3:5. They assume it is water baptism and that you must be baptized in water to be born again. Is this true? No. Notice it says; *born of water, born of the flesh* and *born of the Spirit*. It appears as if there are three births in the verses. What's the answer? Two of them are the same. To be born of the flesh is the same as being born of water, ***for every physical birth is a water birth.*** There are only two births in these verses. Physical and spiritual. And unless you are born the second time by the Spirit you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Be not deceived, water baptism has nothing to do with the New Birth. To be born of water is to be born the first time

physically. To be born of the Spirit is to be born the second time spiritually. If you have been born of water only, you will not enter the kingdom of God. You must be born twice to get into God's kingdom. The New Birth is spiritual birth. It's your spirit spelled with a little "s" being born or begotten of God's Spirit capital "S" according to verse 6. In Titus 3:5 it's called regeneration of the Spirit and in Ephesians 2:1-5 it's called the quickening of the Spirit.

There are those who say that being born again is not a spiritual birth, but the resurrection of the body and they come to this conclusion from reading Acts 13:33 which says that when God raised Christ from the dead he said: ***Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*** When Christ was raised from the dead he was begotten from the dead. In Col. 1:18 he is called the firstborn from the dead. These verses do have a spiritual application to the New Birth in John 3. As Christ's body was dead, our spirit was dead, dead in trespasses and sin. As Christ's body was raised from the dead physically by the Spirit of God, our dead spirit was raised from the dead, quickened, regenerated and made alive by the Spirit of God. Even though there is a spiritual application it is not the correct interpretation. The New Birth is not the physical resurrection of our physical body. We know this is true by the simple fact that the apostles wrote their epistles to people who were alive and had never died but they were all born again.

1Peter 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,

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

James 1:18: Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

1 John 5:1: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1Corinthians 4:15: For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Galatians 4:28-29: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

The apostles were not writing to dead people. They wrote to saints who were alive at the time of their writing and they were all born again proving beyond a doubt the New Birth is spiritual not physical.

The Necessity of the New Birth

Jesus said; ye MUST be born again. But why?

When you were born the first time you received from your earthly parents three things: Their life which was temporal life; their spirit which was dead and their nature which was corrupt. Why was their spirit dead and their nature corrupt? Because of Adam's sin. Romans 5:12 says: ***Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.***

When God placed Adam in the garden he gave him a lot of freedom and only one commandment; ***Genesis 2:16-17 says: And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.***

He had the freedom to eat of all the trees in the garden except one; it's called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God warned them that in ***the day*** they ate that tree they would ***surely die***. As soon as God gave Adam this one commandment not to eat of one single tree, along came the devil to tempt them to do what God said not to do. When the devil showed up in the garden he tempted Adam and Eve to eat of the tree God said not eat of. Eve said to the devil; ***God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.***

The devil said to her: ***Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.***

The devil accused God of lying to them and he said the real reason God does not want you to eat of the tree is because you will gain superior wisdom and knowledge as the gods who were probably angels who occupied the garden with them. They fell for the lie and ate of the tree and they died in that day. They didn't die physically that day for Adam lived over 900 years. They died spiritually. Their spirit died within them and this can be seen in how they hid from God when he came to see them in the garden after they sinned. Prior to the entrance of sin into the world, they had very close fellowship with God, but after sin came they hid from God, they ran when he got near. What happened? Their spirit died and their nature became corrupt and later their body died.

The physical, moral and spiritual condition of Adam and Eve was passed down to all their children including us. When you were born the first time you were born with a dead spirit, a corrupt nature and temporal life. This is why we must be born again for when you are born again you receive from your heavenly Father his life which is eternal, his Spirit which is holy, and his nature which is divine. This makes you fit to live with him forever in the coming kingdom of God.

But be not deceived; being born of water in John 3 is not water baptism; it's the same as being born of the flesh. Being born of water, that is of the flesh, will not get you into the kingdom of God. You must be born the second time and this time by the Spirit of God. How is a person born again? In this same chapter where the Lord says you must be born again, he tells us how in verses 14-16 and especially John 3:16.