

## Born of the Spirit

**W**hen Jesus was crucified, His cross was positioned between the crosses of two criminals. One of the criminals berated Jesus, and the other verbalized his belief in Him as the very Christ sent by God (i.e., the Messiah for the Jews). **And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.** *Luke 23:39-41.* With a penitent heart, the believer confessed his sin and called Him Lord. **And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.** *Luke 23:42.* In response, Jesus said: **Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.** *Luke 23:43.*

By his confession from a penitent heart, the penitent man was “saved.” **For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.** *Romans 10:10.* He was “born of water” as a “washing” unto regeneration according to the Word of Jesus promising salvation to the penitent. **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration,...** *Titus 3:5 (Emphasis added).* More specifically, the penitent man was “born of the Spirit” *by the pure Word*, but he did not receive the Holy Ghost. Recall, the Holy Ghost had not been given to *indwell* any man other than Jesus because Jesus had not yet been “glorified”, i.e., raised from the dead. *John 7:39.*

How can we be sure the sin confessing criminal was sincere, i.e., had a penitent heart? In the presence of God, there is no opportunity to lie to Him. *See, Acts 5:1-11; see also James 2:19.* At the time of Christ, Jesus was “God with us” by virtue of the Spirit dwelling in Him. If the man was not sincere in his confession, or sincerely believe Jesus was the Savior, the man would have been a liar and an unbeliever and Jesus would have never said, “*Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*”

Before His death on the cross, all anyone needed to do is believe in Jesus—the Word and repent of their sins. The same holds true today, but Jesus said we would be better off if He would go because the *another comforter* the Holy Ghost (spirit of the Father) would come to replace Him. **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.** *John 16:7.* **And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;** *John 14:16.*

While He was here people had the benefit of His presence on earth as “God with us”. At that time Jesus was *the* servant to do the Father’s works. The Holy Ghost in Jesus *was* the witness to the Word and the quickening Spirit in Him. When Jesus said, “*Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*” to the penitent criminal, Jesus “declared” the presence of the Father and truth of His Word according

to the Father's will (discussed in more detail in the next section). When the Holy Ghost raised Jesus from the dead and He departed to heaven (*Romans 8:11*), mankind was left without the Father's spirit—the Holy Ghost.

Remember, the Holy Ghost is an enabler, the another comforter, to quicken the mortal body and raise it from the dead giving us life in Him as explained below. **But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.** *Romans 8:11*. By the Holy Ghost we become “renewed” (*Titus 3:5 above*), but not a better form of who *we* are in the flesh. We become a “second” type of creation because of who He is and His life now.

The following account from the Bible occurs *after* the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. This account gives us a specific example of a sinner gaining the Word as the Spirit by being “baptized” in the name of Jesus through belief in Him as God, but *not being* fit for heaven because he lacked the pure (penitent) heart of belief as a child needed for the Holy Ghost to indwell him for salvation. **But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.** *Acts 8:9-22 (Emphasis added).*

A penitent heart is the KEY to salvation yesterday and today! A “pure (penitent) heart” desirous of the will of God promotes our amendment of lifestyle. Those amendments of lifestyle are the “first works” of faith (*Revelation 2:5*) as acts of repentance for salvation as presented previously.

Through repentance *we* receive the Holy Ghost. **Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? then Peter said unto them, Repent, and**

*be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:36-38 (Emphasis added).*

With the Holy Ghost we are “quickenened” to live obediently as the Father’s sons/servants (*Matthew 12:18*) doing the will of God. This all happens out of love from Him first and for Him next. Jesus said: **If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even 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. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. *John 14:15-24 (Emphasis added).***

The place of “abode” (*John 14:23 in italics immediately above*) for the Father to dwell by His spirit *is* us! Our bodies are the temple of (for) the Holy Ghost, provided we have the Word dwelling in our heart out of love for Jesus. **What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. *1 Corinthians 6:19-20.***

The Holy Ghost seals us unto salvation called “sanctification.” **In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, *Ephesians 1:13 (Emphasis added).* And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. *Ephesians 4:30 (Emphasis added).*** By the sanctification of the Holy Ghost, we are “adopted” by God the Father. Hence, the Holy Ghost *is* also called the Spirit of Adoption. **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: *Romans 8:14-16.***

As a child of the Father, we live in Christ, not of our own self. We are “adopted” into the royal family of God (the Spirit), by the Father Himself when He gives us His own spirit—the Holy Ghost. Therefore, this adoption is about the attributes of our “new self” by the Spirit.

**COPYRIGHT 2010 RICKY WASCHER – ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.**