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Contributors: Norman S. Edwards, Alfio La Spina, Darwin Lee, Laura Lee, Michael R. Zaeske

Website: Church of God, Bismarck <https://www.church-of-god-bismarck.org>

Articles

**The State of the Church Today:
Disheartening Woes? Or Doing His Will?**
by Michael R. Zaeske (Kalamazoo, Michigan)

Many Sabbatarian believers are disheartened by what they see as the state of the Church today. Some may even long for the big hierarchical organizations of the past that seemed to be "getting things done." I propose that maybe we are doing what God wants us to be doing and we do not realize it!

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I will be quoting in this article from two short books, and I want to mention them right up front. One is by Zola Levitt, titled *Broken Branches—Has the Church Replaced Israel?* and the other is *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Forty Years* which is a collection of lectures presented by four archaeological scholars who are, in my mind, some of the leaders in biblical archaeological research, including Hershel Shanks, publisher of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

Introduction

To begin, I would like to quote James A. Sanders from the “Panel Discussion” section in *After Forty Years*.

“Sanders, in answer to a question by moderator Hershel Shanks states: “I think there has been an [archaeological scholarship] influence, some of it good and some of it not so good [on the practice of religion.] That is to say, the historic mainline churches are pretty much staffed by ministers from graduates from Harvard and Yale and Union and Claremont and so on. The graduates of these seminaries get their degrees for knowing theories about the historical formation of the Bible, but they don’t know what the Bible says. This is a great lament I have. We get students now in the mainline seminaries who are ignorant of the Bible in the first place because they are not learning it at home or in church anymore. Then they come to seminary and learn all about J, E, D, and P—the documentary hypothesis—but they have not read the Pentateuch yet. The documentary hypothesis is just one theory about possible formation of the Pentateuch.”

Sanders continues:

George Steiner, in the *New Yorker [Magazine]* of February 1988, engages in a real lament and I agree with him when he says that very few people outside of theological circles, or English departments of literature know Bible content anymore. In an address that I gave at Georgetown University last year, I said, ‘Mr. Steiner, it is worse than you think. They don’t know the Bible all that well in theological circles, either.’ “

Well, one thing I can say about most individuals I have come in contact with who have come out of the Churches of God movement, especially those with former ties to Worldwide Church of God and its successor church movements and individuals who studied at Ambassador College: “They know their Bible!”

Indeed, that is perhaps why these groups frequently indulge themselves in promoting the creation and dissemination of so much negative commentary, purposely seek controversy, and frequently, engage themselves in capricious behavior, backbiting, bitterness, subterfuge and ultimately, sometimes even, disassociation from others that I would consider to be their brethren in Christ!

Why is this so? Could it all be a part of God’s Eternal plan? Are we doing what God expected us to do, perhaps even planned for us to do?

Returning to my opening quotation, Sanders quotes Steiner saying, “very few people” know their Bible and then Sanders embellishes on this by adding, in effect, that it is even less than “very few.” Could this perhaps be a “remnant”?

What Is the Church?

Now I do not want to go into great detail here, and I especially do not want to ignite additional controversy, but it seems to me that as modern-day Christians, many of us have preconceived, and often times misconceived ideas about what the “Church” is. In the Old Testament, we frequently find references to “the Congregation of Israel.” To me, there is a simple meaning to this. It means a collection of people, congregated in one place (size of said place indeterminate but probably about the size of what later came to be known as Palestine), which group of people are comprised of Israelites or the children (descendants) of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whose name was later changed to Israel.

The Greek word *ecclesia* is almost always translated “Church” in the New Testament. This word means nothing more, than simply “a collection of people.” It had or has nothing to do with a building, an organization, a ministry, or anything like that. The other way the word was translated in the New Testament was for a “confused” assembly of unbelievers in Acts 19:32, 39 & 41. **The original “church” was**, and still is in my mind, a term for **a collection of people**.

Nowadays, the meanings of the word “church” are several, and for the most part, these definitions are removed from the original meaning. “Church” now is a place, frequently a building where people gather to worship. “Church”—especially a

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denominational church—is also an organization which is comprised of people, ostensibly adhering to a set of doctrines by which the church operates and is governed. Indeed, I think that perhaps God might even be amused to see some church organizations adopt the capital “C”, calling themselves “the Church” and, as such, decide that they have the ultimate authority to tell their members what they can or cannot do to be Biblically correct and pleasing to God!

Typically, an organized church is a hierarchical structure, utilizing a human evolved legal fiction commonly known as a nonprofit corporation. In nearly every case, the founding document of the corporation contains the wording from section 501(c)(3) of the internal revenue code, which makes for easy tax exemption—and promises that the church organization will be subject to the IRS in all things:

...the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) ... (Internal Revenue Code, sec. 501(c)(3).)

As a hierarchical structured organization, certain individuals or groups of individuals have power over others in the Church, usually a minority controlling a majority. It is not the purpose of this article to debate the merits or detriments of organized religion of any denomination or sect of a denomination. I felt it necessary to state what I did in the preceding four paragraphs simply as a point of reference for what is in the remainder of the article.

Has the Church Replaced Israel?

“...[R]eplacement theology [is] a doctrine that has been around almost as long as the church has been in existence.” So says Zola Levitt, a Messianic Jew who wrote *Broken Branches*. Levitt goes on and states that it was St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) who started replacement theology as a church doctrine. “St. Augustine wrote a treatise called *The City of God*, in which he concluded that God was through with Israel and the **Church** [emphasis by this author] was its replacement.”

Look at how early the “Church” was considered to be something other than a collection of people and how early a “Church” (the Roman Church—an organization) was influencing people’s religious beliefs, values, and future understandings and misunderstandings. Questions about “replacement theology” (has the “Church” replaced Israel in Bible promises and prophecy?) are much more easily understood when one starts with a Biblical definition of the “church”.

Who, Then Are Christians?

Based upon scripture, the disciples of Jesus were the first Christians. Reference Acts 11:26 “...the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” The early Christians were the Church—the church being the collection of people-who met, then in individual homes (not church buildings) to discuss, share, learn, and, presumably, then follow, the teachings of Jesus. The church as an institution developed later.

Modern Christianity, from which it logically follows, I would guess, now provides us with an abundance of people who consider themselves to be Christians. But what is modern Christianity? It is a hodge-podge of many organized churches, some 300 denominations in America alone, with sects too numerous to even try and count. And most all are governed by a creed or doctrinal statement which reflects a set of man-developed rules. I know of nowhere in scripture where these creeds or doctrinal statements can be found. I can see how they may have originated, but, again, they are **all** man-made derivations of scripture, not actual scripture itself.

Now please note, thus far I have tried very hard to **not** disparage any who have or do consider themselves to be Christian. I have merely tried to present a few facts as I understand them.

Are There Differences Between Christians?

Well, that’s kind of a silly question. Of course, there are! I can remember a radio preacher some thirty-five years ago who frequently posed the question, “With so many different churches, can they **all** be right?” I used to flip that question around and ask myself, “With so many different churches, can **any** of them be right?” And as a follow on, “and if so, how could one tell for sure?”

After my baptism in 1971, I wanted to do my best to please God. This included, I thought, picking “**the** right church.” Did I ever find it? The short answer is, “no”. I did decide, without too much difficulty, that the Sabbatarian Churches of God

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were probably as close to what I was looking for by way of teachings and beliefs as I could get. I traveled to Worldwide Church of God's Pasadena campus in the spring of 1972 with the full intent of becoming a member. I went to services one Sabbath while I was there in Pasadena and heard one of the most enlightening sermons, I had ever experienced delivered by one of their ministers, Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong.

But there was a problem with my being accepted into the Worldwide Church of God. They wanted me to be re-baptized. I refused. I could not forget the three days I spent confessing and repenting before God, asking him to redeem the mess that my life had become. I could not forget going under the cold lake Michigan water in late November, only to emerge shivering, and then to have Peter Dyck, the minister of the Edgewater Covenant Church, along with several Seminary students, lay hands on me and pray that I might be blessed and receive the “gift of the Holy Spirit.” I remember feeling as though my body were a hollow container and somebody started pouring warm wine into it. I felt a warmth starting at my feet slowly move up my body toward my head. I was a new man.

So, since I refused to be re-baptized, I never became a member of the church organization that I thought at the time to be God's true church. Perhaps God intended for me to be spared from the fallout that occurred when that church group later changed leadership, changed doctrines, and then largely disintegrated. I do not know.

In the meantime, I came to understand the Bible better and I learned a lot about “churches,” both their organization and their governance. But it wasn't until recently, and by this, I mean within the past three or four years, that I really began to grasp what the true church really was about and how one could “find it.”

Enter *The Journal* and PABC

Perhaps seven years ago I subscribed to *The Journal*. For those who are not familiar with *The Journal*, it is a publication that features stories concerning what is going on with Seventh Day Sabbath Churches, splinter groups that absorbed much of the membership of the original Worldwide Church of God. Coincident with this, I became interested in the work that Norman Edwards was trying to move forward in Port Austin, Michigan.

When the very first issue of the “Journal” arrived in my mailbox, I eagerly took it into my home and started to read the many articles and paid advertisements. I was immediately “blown away” by one thing.

I had never before in my life been exposed to such controversy!

Now this is not to imply that I thought this to be bad. Indeed, quite to the contrary, I found that there were important scriptural interpretation issues that others had and **were still** struggling over. I was overwhelmed, to say the least. And I was elated that I had finally found many others who struggled as I had struggled. I quickly realized that I was not the only one who felt there were important things left indeterminate to present day believers. The calendar issues are an example of what I am referring to here.

The other thing that I was exposed to (which truly surprised me) was the depth of conviction different groups, and, in particular, certain individuals had adopted. It reminded me of how Old Testament Israel was frequently referred to in scripture as “a stiff-necked people.”

An Important Scripture

Deuteronomy 4:2 and Rev 22:18-19 admonish us not to take anything away from scripture that is stated and not to add (or embellish) on anything that is presented. Well, isn't the whole idea of a modern organized church (Worldwide Church of God and its offshoots included) something a little more than what is taught in the Bible? Jesus took Peter and stated, “Upon this rock, I found my church” (Matt 16:18). I ask, could this not be interpreted as, “With this person Peter I begin to build a collection of my people, *ecclesia*”

It had nothing to do with an organization, a building, a membership list, a doctrinal statement, or anything like that!

My proof: The seven “churches” discussed in Revelation 2 and 3 are simply groups of faithful believers who gathered in those seven cities. They were the *ecclesia* and nothing more. They met in each other's homes. They did not all believe the same doctrines—how else could it be that Christ was correcting various groups for different problems.

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Something From the O.T.

When God worked with his people Israel, as is frequently revealed in the original Hebrew Scriptures, He got very little cooperation. I mean these people had the luxury of prophets and leadership in many cases, who communicated **with** God. The message back then was very simple: “You are my people, obey me, and I’ll take care of you.” And what happened most of the time? God’s people, Israel, failed miserably in obeying Him and trusting Him to take care of them. And along the way, God caused it to be, that His people, for the most part, forgot their heritage, lost track of the promises made to their forefathers, and became the so called “Lost Tribes of Israel.”

But, in Exodus 31, we are informed of a sign by which God’s people can identify one another. We are told they will be able to identify each other by the simple fact that they are Sabbath keepers.

Fast Forward to Right Now

So, prior to Jesus walking this earth, God’s people had some pretty intimate contact with their Creator through individuals God raised up periodically to let them know what He wanted to be done. The canonized texts of the original Hebrew Scriptures are proof of this.

So, in our times, does God raise up individuals to serve His purposes? Were Herbert W. Armstrong and his son among those individuals? I cannot answer that question, nor do I need to. I never met either one in person, but I do know that their teachings strongly influenced my religious thinking even to this day.

Did they have to have a hierarchical church organization to do what they did? I don’t know the answer to that either. But I have also been influenced by other people who had no such organization, but who wrote and taught, and whose hard work has been preserved.

Now, let me address the really big issue. Does the Church (those with a capital “C” in their name) have ANY authority over how you live your life? Well, the answer is: It depends. Let me be even more specific. Does a church organization have any God-sanctioned, biblically authorized control over your life? Please help me here, but I do not know of any scripture that indicates this to be so. Some scriptures do come to mind about the authority of brethren in a congregation (Matt 18:15-17; 1Cor 5:4-5). I’ve already mentioned my interpretation of “Upon this rock...”

Speaking of Interpretation

It seems interpretation is the area where we always seem to get ourselves in trouble. Nearly every group, and every individual, it sometimes seems (and I include myself here, big-time!), appears to have an idea or two as to how to interpret scripture. Some even go so far as to formalize their thoughts into doctrines and promulgate them through the vehicle of

Eternal Life Is for You, Not Your Church Group

I personally learned a lot of lessons from being in a hierarchical church organization for 20 years. Much can be accomplished and there is often peace. (Those who stay must obey; everyone else is sent away.) However, one often has a false sense of “I am right before God because my group has the truth”. Since I studied little else other than the writings of my own group, I was not aware of other views concerning the meaning of Scripture. Nor was I actively seeking the Holy Spirit to reveal anything to me.” (1Cor 2:10)

Another false concept is, “I will be protected because I am in the right group”. Most church organizations teach a “rapture”, “a place of safety,” or some other doctrine that promises their members deliverance from tribulation to come. This idea that a whole church group will be delivered is opposed to the numerous verses that instruct us to pray for our individual deliverance and to overcome, and, by the Power of God, to do those things that make us worthy of deliverance (Luke 21:36; Matt 24:20, 40-41; Eph 6:13, 1Jo 2:28; Luke 12:41-49; Rev 2 & 3).

The Church of God groups should realize that they have a gift of knowledge—they have learned a lot from the Bible that they need to share. There are now many thousands of evangelical Christians observing, to some degree, the Feast Days, Sabbaths, and other related Biblical doctrines. Church of God groups should realize, however, that they don’t know everything, and that knowledge is not the only gift worth having. Other groups do a better job of helping the needy, healing the sick, evangelizing unbelievers, receiving revelations from God, and teaching young people.

We need to use our gifts for the blessing of other believers—and accept the gifts of others that are bearing fruit. We must stop thinking of ourselves as former members of a group, but rather to think of ourselves as fellow believers doing what God wants done now. We need to work with others of like mind—who may be meeting and working in a great variety of places. We should not judge them by the actions and beliefs of their former group any more than we would want to be judged by the actions and teachings of our former group. May the Eternal help us to do this! —NSE (Norman S. Edwards)

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a “church.”

But this is the lunacy of the whole thing I am discussing. The church is simply a collection of people. Can an organized church, then, tell the body of believers what to do or not do? I do not think so; unless the individuals who consider themselves to be participants (members) of that church allow this to happen. To restate my premise and to put it quite bluntly: **No church has any authority to claim and extend its particular doctrine, good, bad, flawed, or otherwise, on any believer.** Furthermore, when that church uses such a powerful social weapon as disfellowshipping to keep their membership in line—especially when it is a personal belief that is not a threat to the congregation—I think that the leadership of that “church” is pushing the limits of what God intended for His church (again, a collection of believers.)

So, What Did God Intend?

Well, truthfully, here, I can only speculate and offer my opinion because I confess that I have no specific spiritual insight. Only experience. Many experiences. I think God intended for us to be doing exactly what we are doing at this point in time. But, hopefully, without so much of the bickering, backbiting, and the blatant self-assuredness displayed by many that I mentioned earlier in this article.

Paul instructed us to gather together and reason with one another. Let us, the church, get back to that: more Bible study and reasoning with one another. Let us utilize a governance of elders who are truly elders. Let’s utilize what we are instructed to do in Matthew 18:15-17 as a proper means of conflict resolution. And, above all, while it is good to be seeking absolute truth (of interpretation), let us recognize that, if I am correct, there never will be complete harmonization of beliefs among all.

And that is because, as I stated previously, I believe God wants it that way! It allows Him to judge each and every one of us by what is in our hearts. Jesus admonishes us, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” But it is not good enough for many of us to simply “Keep the commandments.” Why is it then that so many of us are modern day “legalists?” Why do we sometimes conclude that others must accept our interpretation of scripture to be “used of God.” I am speaking here of the calendar and similar issues.

Why can’t the statement “alternative calendars accommodated” by church groups be more the norm than the exception? Is not that what love and the golden rule are all about? Look for the **log** in your own eye first; I am trying to tell everyone. God is judging us not by how perfectly we keep the commandments, et al., but by the intensity of our commitment to try and do what pleases him while at the same time, **maintaining** our love, concern, and cooperation for other brethren.

Keeping Sabbaths, feasts and clean-meat rules is not all there is to the Christian life. We are commanded to love others, to help them in need, to teach them, etc. Truth is not something that we use to feel better than all of the others that do not understand our truth. **God is finding out who will use the freedom we have to love and serve others, and who will use it to exalt themselves**—or to just sit back and do little.

Conclusions

We can know who our brethren are by the simple fact that they attempt to maintain both obedience to their Lord and Savior and are recipients of the love of Christ. So, then, should we submit ourselves to the governing authority of an established church? That is an individual choice, but I cannot see where it has anything to do with salvation. It is an issue of works and eternal reward (1Cor 3:12-15). Believers in and out of church organizations have sometimes accomplished little and have sometimes accomplished much.

Should we continue to debate and discuss various interpretations of scripture? Absolutely, but we should do this at the level of reasoning, not at the level of enforced dogma.

It is like the weather. What does it mean when one says “It’s raining?” To me it implies if one goes outside without adequate protection, you’re going to get wet. To a trained professional weatherperson, it could mean virga—rain (or snow) that falls from clouds but never reaches the ground because the atmosphere is so dry it evaporates before it hits the ground. Take the phrase “*God is nowhere*” and remember, in the original Hebrew scriptures there were no separations between words. So, does my run together English phrase mean, “God is now here” or “God is nowhere”, or, perhaps even, “God I snow here”?

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Do you think that I am trying to be cute here? Think again. This is serious stuff, and it causes extreme divisiveness among members of the church (meaning again, a collection of people.) I am going to quote a technical example that teaches a very important lesson from the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 66:

You saw [original authentic] manuscripts this morning with just consonants and maybe a few marginal notations, but the Masoretes did three things with those consonants. They inserted vowels according to the tradition of the oral readings of the time. They inserted accent marks (*te'amim*) and cantillation marks (in the case of poetic sections) so the lector knows how and where to pause. Hershel [Shanks] was citing from Isaiah 40 [v. 3] this morning.

“A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord’” is the way the Masoretes put the accent marks. Matthew was free to read the verse his way because he did not have the advantage of the Masoretic accent marks. He [Matthew] was able to say:

“A voice cries in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord,’” and apply it to John the Baptist.’

The only thing different in the two examples is the punctuation. The Masoretic scribes understanding does not tell where the voice is located but says that the Lord’s way would be in the wilderness. Whereas Matthew understood that the voice would be in the wilderness but does not give a location of the Lord’s way. Matthew was obviously correct as John the Baptist cried out in the wilderness, but Christ taught in both the wilderness and the populated areas.

I rest my case. On certain things contained in scripture, we may **never** know for sure what was actually intended until we meet God face to face. Does this mean someone in a modern organized church is needed to dictate some sort of “fixed” and “approved” understanding. I think not! The true understanding does not always go to the wisest or most studied, but to whom it is revealed: “At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes” (Matt 11:25).

(Unfortunately and a loss to all of us, “The Journal” is no longer printed but can be found at: <http://www.thejournal.org/> “Servants News” is no longer printed but can be found at: <http://www.servantsnews.com/> and “PABC (Port Austin Bible Campus)” is no longer in operation but a tribute exists here: <http://www.portaustin.net/pabc/>

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Iron Sharpening Iron

New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

In regard to: The Test Commandment

Article by Robert Schmid
Comments by Alfio La Spina (Victoria British Columbia)

He makes this statement in his article which is absolutely false, it is completely against what the scriptures teach. Too many follow these false teachers who lead brethren to destruction!

I did not read the whole article, what I did read was enough to make me furious!

(Begin quote) What about us? Can we keep all of the Fathers commandments and thereby express our love to God, as did Jesus Christ our example? Well, the answer is both Yes and No. Let me explain. The answer is an obvious NO, we cannot keep the Fathers commandments as did Christ, because we have all sinned and will continue to sin and fall short in our ability to keep the commandments, no matter how hard we try. **(End quote)**

1 John 3:6-10 (ESV) 6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. 8

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Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. 10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

There is much proof in scripture that shows we need to be without sin.

In regard to: The Test Commandment
Article by Robert Schmid
Comments by Darwin & Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

In the future, we would advise reading the entire article before you comment on it. The article “The Test Commandment” is not telling people it is okay to practice sin. It is talking about how the 4th commandment in regard to keeping a Saturday Sabbath is a test commandment for a sign between God and His people.

We have dealt with people through the newsletter all around the world and we have found many Sunday Keepers who know and understand the Bible better than many Saturday Sabbath Keepers who came through The Worldwide Church of God. We have also encountered many who keep a Saturday Sabbath who think it is okay to go to the store and do their shopping on Saturday and who at the same time do not believe they need to keep the Holy Days.

The major problem is that all people who are being called at this time are in different stages of working toward perfection. We believe as you do Alfio that all of God's people should be striving for perfection, but we do not believe the author of this article was promoting intentional sin. We think it is more of a matter, that a lot of times in trying to be perfect we do fail and that process of trying and failing will take place all our lives until we die.

Now at what point do we reach that goal of a sin free and perfect life? Everyone knows that when a baby is conceived it spends a period of time in the mother's womb before it is born. A human baby starts as a glob of cells with no particular form. As the baby is nourished by the mother, the baby grows forming all the parts needed to become a person. It grows arms, legs, and inner organs. Once everything is formed and the baby can leave the mother's womb and live separate from the mother, it is born (approximately 9 months after conception).

So, with that in mind, what does it mean to be born again? We can know what that means because of the questions that Nicodemus asked Christ. For us to enter the Kingdom we must first be born again. So, we really need to know what that means.

Once we are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, we are spiritually conceived but not yet born again. We start out as grown people with only a small amount of God's Holy Spirit. We can choose not to do anything with what we have been given at which point we might just die in the spiritual womb, or we can choose to grow in grace and knowledge. We grow in grace and knowledge by learning what God wants of us and then by doing it. This is a lifetime process. We are not sin free and perfect until we are born again. In human flesh form we are still in the womb being formed into a new man or woman. That formation takes place by being fed by God's spirit through His word, and the church (the mother of us all). We help you grow spiritually. You help us grow spiritually as in being fed. Once totally mature, perfect, you are now ready to be “born again”! Just as a baby is mature/perfect (barring a birth defect), it becomes ready to be born. The above is an analogy that can be backed up by Scripture.

John 3:3 (KJV) 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 3:5 (KJV) 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.**

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This is the beginning of the second birth process.

Acts 2:38 (KJV) 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 (Spirit).

John 3:6 (KJV) *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

John 3:7 (KJV) *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. V. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

Notice in verse 5 Jesus uses born in context of born of water and born of Spirit. In verse 8 He only speaks of born of the Spirit to enter The Kingdom of God, a literal birth (born again). Change, birth, born again, takes place when?

1 Corinthians 15:52 (KJV) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Corinthians 15:50-51 (KJV) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

Verse 5 is the beginning of a new birth as a baby has a beginning in a new birth at conception and is literally born at birth, leaving its mother's womb. So, to, the second birth has a beginning at baptism with water and the Spirit but only completed in full at the time of change from flesh to spirit essence.

1 John 3:9 (KJV) Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

When we are born again, we are like the wind, invisible. At the point of being born again we have spirit bodies and not flesh and blood bodies. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

So, being sin free and perfect is not something we will attain while we are yet flesh and blood, but once we are born again as spirit beings, we will be sin free and perfect.

If one sins, then he or she is not born of God yet. And if you are now born again, We are not able to see you! Hat pin test please.

So here is the problem, the false doctrine is when we teach people, they can attain a sin free and perfect life while they are yet flesh and blood. People in flesh and blood form can only strive to be sin free and perfect, they cannot attain a sin free or perfect life until they are born again as spirit beings.

1 John 1:8 (KJV) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Consider this scenario, you are baptized you grow in grace and in knowledge, tried and tested, become mature/perfect, (you think). You were 25 years old when baptized/called by God, 30 years of working towards perfection, you are absolutely convinced you have reached perfection, now all you must do is stay vigilant. Let's say you live another 30 years, you are then 85 years old and must remain sinless those 30 years or guess what, if you even sin once in those 30 years, if you don't maintain that "sinless state", you now just proved you are indeed not BORN AGAIN! Scripture is clear, if one sins, that person is not born again. And one sin is all it would take to prove you are not born again!

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1 John 3:9

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of

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God.”

The key to understanding this text lies in the meaning of the word “seed.” There is perfect assurance that the “seed” will provide total victory over sin. Who is this “seed” whose presence in the life can guarantee strength to obey? We find the answer in Revelation 12:17: “And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

The seed of the woman was the man child of verse 5 “who was to rule all nations” and “was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” Here it is firmly established that Christ is the seed. Further evidence is found in Galatians 3:16, where God said to Abraham, “And to thy seed, which is Christ.”

Now we can grasp the beautiful truth in the Scripture before us. Those who are truly born of God do not willfully sin, because Christ is enthroned in their hearts. The only way they can choose to sin is by separating from Christ. In other words, the abiding presence of Christ and the willful commission of sin do not operate simultaneously in the same heart at the same time. Deliberate sin always separates us from Christ, and the Holy Spirit does not become a minister of sin. Contrariwise, those who are genuinely converted and have the indwelling of the Spirit will be able to overcome sin in all its forms and approaches.

This text does not mean that Christians are incapable of committing wrong acts (or else there would be no virtue in their being without sin); rather, their love for Christ constrains them from walking contrary to His will. The word “sin” here is in a Greek form that indicates a continuing process. In other words, even if they stumble into a sin, they will not continue such a course; but rather, will repent sincerely, repudiating any willful violation of God’s revealed will.