

A BRINGING FORTH FROM ABOVE

PART II

The Way Scripture Deals with the Matter

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Part I of this pamphlet series provided introductory material pertaining to how a bringing forth from above is used and dealt with in John's Gospel. This second part will continue with the same subject, showing that the matter is dealt with exactly the same way in the three other New Testament books where the expression is used — in James, I Peter, and I John (most extensive usage).

(This matter, of course, is seen and dealt with throughout Scripture — both the O.T. and the N.T. — though only seen dealt with in so many words certain places in Scripture.

For example, Nicodemus [John 3:1ff] should have known, from the O.T. Scriptures, exactly what Christ was talking about, along with all other Jewish leaders and teachers of that day — “Art thou a master [‘teacher’] of Israel and knowest not these things?” [John 3:10b].)

James

James 1:15-18 shows a *begetting*, a *bringing forth from both below and above* (ref. John 1:12, 13; 8:37-44, Pt. I). Verse fifteen shows the former (*from below*), and verse eighteen the latter (*from above*).

In verse fifteen, the Greek words *tikto* (“to beget,” “to bring forth”) and *apokueo* (“to bring forth,” “to give birth [as seen in a medical respect]”) are used in a somewhat synonymous sense, with *apokueo* showing “results.” *Tikto* is used in the first part of the verse (“bringeth forth sin”); and *apokueo* is used in the latter part of the verse showing *the results*, in the sense of “sin” having given birth to

(“bringeth forth death”).

Then in verse eighteen, *apokueo* is used relative to *life instead of death*, as seen in verse fifteen. And this word is used relative to *the power of the Word in a Christian's life, effecting, giving birth to, the metamorphosis — the results of the power of the Word* (ref. the author's book, SALVATION OF THE SOUL, Ch. IV):

“Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth...”

Thus, these two words are used in James relative to Christians either being brought forth from below (through that associated with sin, *resulting in death*) or being brought forth from above (through the Word, *resulting in life*).

I Peter

God bringing individuals forth in I Peter 1:3, 23 has to do with additional commentary on that seen in John 3:3-8. But, rather than the message being drawn from events surrounding the offer of the kingdom to Israel and having to do with a reoffer of the kingdom to Israel (as in John's gospel), the message in I Peter is directed to the one to whom the kingdom of the heavens was offered after it had been taken from Israel (cf. Matt. 21:33-45; I Peter 2:9, 10).

The message in I Peter is seen directed to *the one new man* “in Christ,” to Christians. And it is a simple matter to see in both verses in I Peter chapter one (vv. 3, 23) that the birth from above — being brought forth *from above, out of God* — has to do with saved individuals, not with the unsaved.

I Peter 1:3 should literally read:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us from above with respect to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ out of the dead.”

Being brought forth *from above* in this verse is with respect to a *living hope*, made possible through *the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead*.

Christians have been saved for a purpose, and that purpose is seen in the entirety of this verse, along with the verses which follow (vv. 4ff). That is to say, Christians have been saved (a past bringing forth *from above*) with a view to their being brought forth *from above* (present aspect of salvation), which has to do with a *living hope*, a hope made possible through Christ's resurrection. And this hope has to do with *an incorruptible inheritance inseparably connected with the saving of the soul* (vv. 4-10).

The salvation presently possessed by every Christian has to do with *Christ's death*. It has to do with *death and shed blood*. This is the unchangeable manner in which matters were set forth in Genesis, beginning with chapter three.

This is why Paul, when first going to Corinth and dealing centrally with unsaved individuals, proclaimed one message alone — “Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (I Cor. 2:1, 2).

The gospel of grace involves *death and shed blood*. Then, *burial and resurrection* form continuing parts of the overall gospel message and have to do with present and future aspects of salvation. Seen within the type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve, *death and shed blood* would have to do with that involved in the slaying of the paschal lambs and the proper application of the blood. The death of the firstborn, with God being satisfied, occurred at this point. But *burial and resurrection* are seen at points beyond — at the Red Sea passage, and on the eastern banks of the Sea.

Being brought forth from above in I Peter 1:3 has to do with *resurrection*, not with death and shed blood. It has to do with realizing a *living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead*. Thus, it can only have to do with *present and future aspects of salvation*, not with the past aspect (which is the “why” of the explanation in John 3:5ff to Christ's statement in v. 3).

A different facet of the same thing is seen in I Peter 1:23. The begetting from above is accomplished “through the living and abiding word of God” (NASB). And it is plain from continuing

verses (vv. 24, 25) that verse twenty-three is referring to the written word, which is “quick [‘alive’], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword...” (Heb. 4:12a).

The picture in I Peter 1:23 is that of *the metamorphosis* (cf. Rom. 12:1, 2; Col. 3:10) — the indwelling Spirit taking the implanted Word and effecting spiritual growth from immaturity to maturity (James 1:18, 21). This work of the Spirit is spoken of in I Peter 1:23 as something brought forth *from above* (*out of God*); and this can be experienced *only by the saved*, for:

- 1) The person must first possess spiritual life in order for spiritual growth to occur.
- 2) The saving of the soul rather than a Christian’s presently possessed salvation is in view (James 1:21; I Peter 1:3-9).

(For additional information on *the implanted Word* and *the metamorphosis*, refer to the author’s book, SALVATION OF THE SOUL, Chapters III, IV.)

I John

Individuals being brought forth out of God in I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18 has to do with additional commentary on that seen in both John 1:11-13 and John 3:3-8, along with being perfectly in line with that seen in James 1:15-18 and I Peter 1:3, 23.

I John though is slightly different than I Peter. Though it is evident that I John was written to Christians (as James and I Peter), the book was also evidently written for the same purpose as John’s gospel. The structure of I John runs parallel with parts of John’s gospel, particularly the opening three chapters of the gospel, along with the stated purpose in chapter twenty (vv. 30, 31).

Note that John began his epistle as he had begun his gospel — taking the reader all the way back to the beginning (cf. John 1:1; I John 1:1). Then, after dealing with matters in this respect, along with singling out Christ and pointing to His true

identity (exactly as seen in the gospel account), John immediately places matters within the confines of the typology of the tabernacle. He calls attention to sin, confession of sin, and forgiveness of sin.

Though it is not dealt with in so many words, there appears to be an allusion and call to Israel in this respect (paralleling the call for “repentance” in the gospel accounts). The Jewish people had sinned, but forgiveness could be forthcoming, if... And this allusion and call to Israel continues at places throughout the epistle in matters related to being brought forth *out of God*.

Note, for example, that being brought forth *out of God* in I John 5:1-5 is identical to that seen in John 1:11-13; 20:30, 31. In both places, being brought forth *out of God* has to do with believing that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.”

This is exactly what the Jewish people *were called upon to believe in both the offer and reoffer of the kingdom*. Both the words “Christ” and “Son,” textually, have *regal* implications — *the Christ* (*the Messiah*, the One Who was to rule and reign); and *the Son* (“Sonship,” implying *rulership*, for only *Sons* can rule in God’s kingdom). This was the One to Whom God would one day give the sceptre and place on His “holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2:6, 7; Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15).

The signs in John’s gospel were given to effect *belief among the Jewish people that Jesus was the Christ, God’s Son, Who would one day take the sceptre and reign*. This is seen connected with being brought forth *out of God* in John 1:11-13, and this is seen *exactly the same way* in I John 5:1-5.

In the preceding respect, I John, undoubtedly written during the time of the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel (as John’s gospel), would have to be viewed much like Rom. 1:16 (cf. Rom. 2:5-16) — “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

(For information concerning the time of the offer and subsequent reoffer of the kingdom to Israel, refer to the author’s book, SIGNS IN JOHN’S GOSPEL, Ch. I, pp. 11, 12.)

Being brought forth *out of God* in I John (mentioned ten times in six verses [2:29; 3:9 (twice); 4:7; 5:1 (three times); 5:4; 5:18 (twice)]) has to do with exactly the same thing as seen in John’s gospel (chs. 1, 3), in James (1:18), or Peter’s first epistle (1:3, 23). It has to do with *works of the Spirit among the saved* (*which are not necessarily identical in each instance*), *connected with a child-training of sons*.

For example, note that being brought forth in this manner has to do with believing the truth about Jesus being the Christ, God’s Son, in John 1:11-13 and I John 5:1, 5; and in John 3:5, James 1:18, I Peter 1:3, 23, and most of the references in I John, the thought of being brought forth in this manner has to do with maturity in the faith.

Within the scope of being brought forth *out of God* in I John, *only that which is of God will manifest itself*.

This will explain why mainly perfect tenses are used in the Greek text throughout I John, pointing to a past, completed action, existing during present time in a finished state (eight of the ten usages in I John are in the perfect tense, as well as John 3:6, 8 and I Peter 1:23) — a tense structure showing *present action among believers surrounding that which is out of God, based on a past Divine work*.

Also, this will explain why sin cannot exist within the scope of that brought forth *out of God* in I John 3:6, 9; 5:18. Anything connected with the world, the flesh, and the Devil *must exist outside the scope of that brought forth out of God*. And, conversely, things such as abiding in Him, keeping His commandments, and love *must exist within the scope of that brought forth out of God*.

The whole of the matter is really that simple and easy to understand. A person is either active in one sphere or the other. *There is no middle ground* (cf. Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23).

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