

Knowing God's Spirit

Ray Burkholder

In the Bible, we can find examples of people who thought they worshipped God until their blindness (hardness of heart and eyes) was taken away.

Acts 16:13-14 says, "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, **which worshipped God**, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

Paul preached the Gospel (Christ crucified in 1 Cor 15:1-4) and she believed. Then, God opened her heart. Then, she could see Spiritually (was born again).

Acts 10:1-2 says, "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band. A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and **prayed to God always.**"

Acts 10:42-45 continues by saying, "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever **believeth** in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost" (they became born again).

Acts 15:7-11 refers to the process of transitioning from being only Jew only to being Gentiles. Paul himself thought he was worshiping God before God opened his eyes and changed his heart, which we can see when we read Acts 9.

Philippians 3:4-9 says, "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"

We can plainly see that all the people mentioned in the Scriptures above were changed from natural to Spiritual (born again). They all thought they were worshipping God until they were born again, and then they saw things differently. They went from darkness to Light. Jesus opened many people's hearts and eyes in the Bible, and it has been happening ever since.

What a glorious Savior that we have! Have your heart and eyes been opened (Spiritually/born again)? They must be in order to go into the Kingdom of God. According to the Bible, there are no exceptions.

We see another example in John 9 when a man that was born blind had his eyes opened.

John 9:25-27 says, "He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?"

Let me stop here and ask a couple of questions. Are you one of his disciples? Have you had your eyes/heart opened (been born again)?

John 9:39 says, "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind."

Here Jesus is saying that he came to make those that were Spiritually blinded able to see. It's also saying some people think they know God, but they don't know him (because of blindness). Read John chapter 9, and you will see how the Pharisees responded because of their blindness.

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 says, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world(satan) 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?"

Pretty plain language, is it not?

Jesus tells us the ONLY way INTO the kingdom of God is to be born again. There are no exceptions according to Jesus himself, and Paul also says it.

John 3:3-6 says, "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. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 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. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Here, Jesus is saying that the first birth is when we are born from flesh which is a natural/water/fleshly birth. The second birth is when we are Spiritually born from above (spiritually from God, not from man). This is a free gift from God.

Colossians 2:11-13 says, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (only God could do this): Buried with him in baptism (into Christ, by God), wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead (resurrection). And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh (1st birth, natural) hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses (2nd birth, Spiritual).

1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (Christ's church), whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

1 Corinthians 12:27 says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

There is only one church, and that is Christ's church or the body of Christ (Kingdom of God). Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

Ephesians 4:5-6 says, "One Lord, one faith (Jesus), one baptism (from God). One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Once a person becomes born again, they will know it because they will have God's Spirit in their hearts, and everything will look different. Everything is brighter and more vivid, understanding is different, etc. The Bible says that He will give us of His Spirit (once we become born again) and God cannot lie.

Hebrews 6:18 says, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:"

Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"

Galatians 4:6 says, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

John 14:17 says, "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."

1 Corinthians 3:16 says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Do you want to be able to see Spiritually? Do you want to become born again? It's a free gift for anyone of any age, any race, any religion etc.

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift(a gift is free)of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ask God to take all your sins away from you! Give him all your sins and problems. Everything! Jesus died for the ungodly, so it doesn't matter what your situation is. Please just give it to Jesus, and cling to him! He wants a personal relationship with you!

Romans 5:6 says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."

Romans 3:10 says, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:"

Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

1 John 1:8-9 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Romans 10:13 says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Romans 10:9 says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt BELIEVE in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (born again)."

Are you at peace with God? Have all your sins been washed away by the blood of the lamb? Would you be ready to die today?

I will finish with two Scriptures.

Hebrews 10:10, which says, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

And John 4:24 says, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Praying for Gods blessings on everyone!