

Today many who attend church regularly when asked, "What do the words 'gospel', or 'good news' mean?" OR "What does it mean to be 'born again?'" give various and confusing answers. They may answer, "It means I asked Jesus into my heart, or I believe my sins are forgiven." But many are not clear what that really means and what are the consequences?

To understand the words 'gospel', 'good news' or 'born again' we also need to answer the questions often asked by unbelievers. "Why did God have to send His Son to die on the Cross? "What difference does it make to me or to anyone that Jesus died and rose? and "Why do I need to be Born Again - Why is this necessary? I am already a good person."

To answer these questions and understand why God sent His Son to die and rise again and the difference this means for those who believe, we need to go back to the Book of Genesis in the Bible. Here we read that after God created the earth and all that is in it, He made man (Adam) and woman (Eve). He gave them His creation to enjoy and to tend. They lived in harmony with Him and received His care and counsel each day. There was one restriction - they were forbidden to eat of the TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD & EVIL in the middle of the garden.

However, Eve listened to the lies of the Devil who tempted her to eat as she thought it would make her wise. She ate of the fruit and gave it to Adam (who had been told not to eat it). By this act of disobedience and rebellion they lost their connection with God's Spirit and were banished from the Garden to toil on the earth in their own strength.

What is it to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? It is to disregard God's direction and go our own independent way, ignoring God and putting our own opinions above His word. When Adam ate of The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, he chose to decide what is good and evil for himself without reference to God. He walked away from God and from His counsel and so separated himself from God. Sin entered his life, and corruption and death entered his nature and pervaded his heart. This was the condition he passed on to his descendants. All Adam & Eve's descendants (including you and I) are born with the fallen Adam nature.

The New Testament declares that *"God so loved the world that He sent His son so that ANYONE who believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life."* (John 3.16) God the Father sent His Son (Jesus) to die and shed His perfect Blood for our sin and sins. His death on the Cross opens the way for all mankind to return to God and be united with Him once again. After three days in the tomb

Jesus rose to a New Resurrected Life. On the Cross God Himself took the blame for the sin and sins of the world for every human being and satisfied God's perfect justice and wrath. *"Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."* (Hebrews 9.22)

This is now an accomplished fact. The sin and sins of the world were paid for on the Cross and ANYONE who wants to be forgiven and restored to the realm of God's favor and blessing which Adam lost can return home. The gospel proclaims this invitation TO ALL PEOPLE to come home despite our past moral failures and sins and be reconciled and fully restored to God's love, care favor and blessing and to RECEIVE A NEW LIFE - the life and Spirit of Jesus!

When we put our faith in Jesus' Death, Burial & Resurrection we also die to our Adam (sin) life and are RAISED TO A NEW LIFE - a share in the Resurrection Life of Jesus. Our spirits and His Spirit become one. *"If any man is in Christ He is a New Creation - the old is passed away."* (2 Cor... 5.17) We can now put our old life behind us - we can begin again and be made new. This is what 'Born Again' means, and this is the essence of the Gospel.

We too must go through the Cross and leave behind our sinful life. We go through to the RESURRECTION SIDE of the Cross where we now live. Jesus is no longer on the Cross - He is risen! He did enough! We too rise to Resurrection Life in Him and with Him.

The believer in Jesus is one who has not only received forgiveness and restoration but has also received the Life of the Resurrected Jesus - the Spirit of God to be his new life principle and driving force. We are no longer independent, ego driven, sin driven people but are filled with the life and nature of God - if we receive it and walk in it.

We choose to live in TOTAL DEPENDENCE on the Lord and His abundant goodness - turning away from our life of independence and rebellion. We have been born twice. In our first birth we received biological life from our parents. In the second, by an act of PERSONAL CONSCIOUS ACCEPTANCE, we received God's life to be our new life principle - leaving the old sin-life behind.

This is our highest destiny: being promoted from being mere sons of Adam to become sons of God and living in partnership and love with God. *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"* I John 3.1

'MAKE LOVE YOUR AIM!' 1 Corinthians 14.1