

THE MIRACLE OF THE NEW BIRTH

The Christian life has its beginning in the supernatural work of God. While religion and religious dogma are natural to man, being born of the Spirit of God (the new birth) requires supernatural power. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). The Apostle John wrote, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

The new birth is a supernatural event that begins with the Holy Spirit convicting individuals of the reality of God and of their sin. On the Day of Pentecost, many of those who heard the Gospel were pricked in their hearts and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). The Holy Spirit brings this

same conviction of sin to lead souls to Jesus as Saviour. Thus they are led to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

When people receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour, they find reconciliation with their heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit joins Himself with their spirit, and they are born from above (born again). The converted person was convicted by the Holy Spirit, drawn by the Spirit, born of the Holy Spirit, baptized with the Holy Spirit (the Spirit was poured out upon him), and is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Having been born from above, these people are disciples of Jesus Christ and now live their lives by the grace and power of God, given to them by the agency of the Holy Spirit. Such a life (the abundant life) is completely focused on Jesus. True Christians have a real desire to be like Christ, share in His ministry, bear His fruit, and glorify His Father. This is the

greatest of all miracles and the most needed today—that of lost souls being brought out of darkness into light through the gracious work of the triune God.

SUPERNATURAL POWER— AN ESSENTIAL FOR CHRISTIANITY

The Christian life can be properly lived only by supernatural power. The Greek word is *dunamis*, which is usually translated “power” and is used 120 times in the New Testament. *Dunamis* was what the disciples received when the “promise of the Father” was fulfilled through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). However, this power cannot be isolated as an entity of itself. Spiritual power is never an independent commodity but is always associated with abiding in Christ and

having the Holy Spirit dwelling within.

It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to take the goods (spiritual blessings) that Christ gives to the church and make them available to us individually, for our personal needs, and collectively, for the needs of the body. Jesus explained this in John 16:13, 14: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

This is why a Spirit-filled life is a Christ-focused life. The believer seeks Jesus; he has no interest in miracles, signs, and wonders as ends in themselves. At the same time, no one can abide in Christ and be filled with the Holy Spirit without having works of *dunamis* evident in his life. It certainly is possible to have religion without *dunamis*; this is one of the

tragedies of the perilous times in which we live. Paul wrote about people “having a form of godliness, but denying the power [*dunamis*] thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5). Such people make a profession of the Gospel, but they have no power to live the reality of the Gospel.

Jesus’ life was full of divine power. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me” (Luke 4:18). After His temptation in the wilderness, “Jesus returned in the power [*dunamis*] of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about” (Luke 4:14). The same power was present in the early church. “With great power [*dunamis*] gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33). “Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people” (Acts 6:8). The Apostle Paul wrote, “The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power