

# BEGOTTEN BY THE WORD OF GOD

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James 1:18, *“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creature.”*

James speaks of Christ who has begotten “us” with the word of truth. Surely being begotten of Christ is a good and perfect gift from above. That is what James was referring to in verse 17. The word “begat” means: to bring forth from the womb, or to produce”. The “word of truth” is no doubt speaking of Gods written word. Paul said to Timothy, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”*.

These simple thoughts bring up a very good question. Is the gospel the means of being regenerated? At first glance this verse may appear to be saying that. But before we jump into taking a firm opinion on this, let us first consider a few other truths found in Gods word.

The Greek word for “begat” can also be found in the closing phrase of the 15th verse of the same chapter where James said, “bringeth forth” death. James certainly was not speaking of being regenerated in this verse. James is showing how man is responsible for his deeds, from conception to death. *“Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death”*. Man has no one to blame for his wicked deeds but himself. It certainly is not God that has tempted him to sin; it is all of man’s own lust.

Next, James begins to speak of good and perfect gifts from above and uses again the analogy of a birth, *“of his own will begat he us with the word of truth”*. There are other places where the analogy of birth is used:

1 Corinthians 4:15, *“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel”*

Galatians 4:19, *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”*.

Philemon v.10, *“I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds”*

In none of the references aforementioned is the Apostle Paul referring to being regenerated or born again, yet we see the analogy of a birth being used to show how Paul had labored with them in his ministry. Again we ask the question: is the Gospel instrumental in one being quickened by the Holy Spirit? Must one hear the Gospel to be born again, regenerated? My answer to that is no!

It is unfortunate but true that man exalts himself to the position and power of Almighty God, assuming a partnership with God in eternal salvation. Is the sovereignty of God reduced to relying upon man to assist God with His plan of salvation? Does God need us? The Lord asked Job, (38:4) *“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding”*. Isaiah 63:5 states, *“And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me”*.

My friends, God the Father did not need us to create the heavens and the earth. He created all things in six days by his almighty and sovereign power. God the Son did not need us on Calvary; we were like sheep gone astray and had turned everyone to his own way. And just as God the Father and God the Son were sovereign in their work, so is God the Holy Ghost in quickening whom he will.

The Holy Ghost is sovereign in his work of regeneration and, thankfully, is not dependant upon man to carry out his work. Christ was speaking to Nicodemus in the 3rd chapter of John concerning the doctrine of regeneration. Christ compared the method of the new birth and the work of the Holy Spirit as the wind, *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whiter it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit”*. The wind blows when and where it pleases. We are powerless to alter the direction of the wind. But we can see the evidence of when the wind has blown. The evidence of the wind blowing might be as small as a gentle rustling of the leaves in a tree to a storm that has left cars on their tops and houses lifted from their foundation. It isn't the wind that is seen in any case, but rather the evidence that the wind has blown.

Christ goes on to say, *“So is everyone that is born of the Spirit”*. Everyone is born by the miraculous and sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit of God. The wind of God can blow on the one who dies in infancy, it can blow on the ones who are mentally incapable of understanding Gods word, it can blow in the far regions of the world to those who are in a distant far off land and have never heard the gospel, the wind of God blew on all his elect in the Old Testament. The wind bloweth where it listeth! And unless the Spirit of God has regenerated you you cannot even hear God's word in a spiritual since. Christ said in John 8:47, *“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God”*. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, *“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God”*.

If the scripture title were a reference to being regenerated, surely Christ would have always had a desire that it be preached to “all the world”. But Christ said in Luke 10:21, *“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise a prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so,*

*Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight". Also in Matthew 10:5, "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". If the gospel was so instrumental to Gods plan of salvation, why would he try to keep it from some?*

So what is James talking about in the 18th verse? Remember whom he is talking to. Ch. 1:1 says, "*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greetings*". James is talking to the Jews. It was Christ who had begotten them by the word of truth. The truth originated from Christ and produced a people among the Jews that believed His word. They were referred to as a "kind of firstfruits". Firstfruits were the first of the crop that was offered to God. The first fruit signified two things: 1) If God was pleased with the firstfruits then he would bless with a bountiful harvest, 2) The firstfruits was just the very beginning of what was yet to come.

The believing Jews were the first to hear the gospel of Christ. Paul said in Romans 1:16, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*". Also in Ephesians 1:12 states, "*...That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ*". It was the Jews that first trusted in Christ.

There was now a new way of worship that Christ had set up in the New Testament church. This new worship would begin with the death of Christ, when he was seated in the throne of glory. Matthew 19:28 states, "*And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*". There were Jews that followed Christ in the regeneration, that is to say, in the new way of worship. The worship of God would not be confined to a Jewish temple, but men of God could praise and worship God in any place, as long as the worship was in spirit and in truth. The worship of God in truth would not be confined to a few among the Jews, but would expand out into the Gentiles. It was not law worship anymore, but grace worship. The sacrifice of animals would no longer be required, as the ultimate sacrifice and the one to whom all sacrifices pointed to was crucified on Calvary's cross.

It was a new way of worship and Christ begat them, as their originator, by the word of truth. This begetting didn't make children of God; but Gods word fed those who were already children of God. The Jews, which followed Christ, were a kind of firstfruits of those who would most surely be blessed to hear the gospel truth of Jesus Christ our Redeemer and to join His local church, the Bride of Christ!