Jesus said "...except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (CP Jn 3:1-7). Being born again expresses the change wrought in the life of a repentant sinner by the Holy Spirit after being converted to Christ. It means the sinner has died unto sin and has been born anew unto righteousness. How this happens is that when the gospel is preached the Holy Spirit works through the word exposing sin to awaken in the hearts of those open to receiving the gospel, a consciousness of guilt and the need for forgiveness. This leads them to repentance and to acknowledge their need of a saviour (CP 2 Cor 7:9-10). Repentance is that divinely wrought conviction of sin in the heart that the soul is guilty before God, and a resolute turning away from sin. It involves both a change of mind about sin and a change of heart-attitude toward sin. It is at the time a renunciation of sin and an acceptance of the Holy Spirit's enabling power for holy living. Repentance is both God's gift, and man's responsibility (CP Ac 5:31 with Lu 15:11-24). The parable of the prodigal son emphasises the character of true repentance: a complete turn-around and return to our heavenly Father is required. Truly repentant sinners have a deep conviction of their lost state, and earnestly seek to be reconciled to God. They determine to be partakers of the kingdom of God and all the salvation benefits Christ purchased for us with His blood on the cross of Calvary (CP Mt 11:12).

That is what Jesus means in Jn 3:3 when He says "...except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Seeing the kingdom of God is actually perceiving it and its realities through the salvation that can only be obtained through abiding in Christ and having His word abiding in us (CP Ac 4:10-12). As they hear the gospel, repentant sinners are made aware by the Holy Spirit of God's standard of righteousness in Christ and they turn to Christ for salvation (CP Jn 16:7-11; Rom 1:16-17; 2Cor 4:6). Being born again means literally being born anew, begotten from above, from God (CP Jn 1:12-13; 2Pe 1:1-4; 1Jn 2:29). This is one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith: the doctrine of regeneration, or the new birth. It is not limited to the initial act of renewal when we are first converted to Christ, but is a continuous work of the Holy Spirit renewing and transforming our lives as we surrender ourselves to the Lordship of Christ and the authority of His word throughout the entirety of our Christian walk (CP Ro 12:2). Once we have committed our way to God we are no longer to be conformed to a world system that is without God, but be transformed by a renewed mind committed to the ideals of the kingdom of God. "Prove" means to test, to prove by practice in everyday life that God's will for us is good and acceptable and perfect. Our minds must be conformed to God's way of thinking. Our plans, goals and ambitions must be determined by heavenly and eternal truths, not by this evil, temporal and transient age (CP Eph 4:20-32). There is a teaching within the teaching here. Note in V28 that the first motive for a believer to earn money is that he may have something to give to someone else. The occupational enterprise of Christians is not simply to make a living for themselves but to also be a channel of blessing for others in need.

We learn from scriptures that man sets himself apart unto God to be holy and God accepts him, forgives him and cleanses him, making him holy by the truth and by faith (CP Lev 20:7-8; Eze 18:30-31; Jn 17:17-19; Ac 26:18; Tit 3:3-6; 1Pe 1:15-16). The word *conversation* in 1Pe 1:15 means behaviour - it is our behaviour that sets us apart unto holiness before God. But we can only maintain that state of holiness by the empowering of the Holy Spirit, and for that empowering to be effective in our lives we must always be yielded to the Holy Spirit's leading (CP Ro 8:5-17; Ga 5:16-25; 6:7-9). Grieving the Holy Spirit leads to resisting Him (CP Ac 7:51); this in turn leads to quenching the Spirit (CP 1Th 5:19), and finally to despising Him (CP He 10:26-31), which will damn us for eternity. "Renewing of the Holy Ghost" in Tit 3:5 refers to the constant impartation of divine life to believers by the Holy Spirit after we surrender our lives to God (CP 2Pe 1:3-4). We must always continue willing to follow Christ in strict obedience to His word unto the end of our earthly life. Salvation is only assured to those sowing to the Spirit at the end of their life on earth. Whatever we are in life when we die is what we will be throughout eternity (CP Jude 21; Rev 22:11-12). Regeneration involves a complete transformation of our moral nature - a complete change of heart which expresses the change from the person we were to the person we become in Christ (CP Eph 2:1-8; Col 3:1-10). If we have made the way of Christ our way of life it will very plainly show (CP 2Cor 5:17; Ga 6:15). A great many Christians erroneously believe that we can never attain to righteousness and true holiness in this life but if it were not possible God would not have commanded it. It can only be done though through the blood Jesus shed for us at Calvary. None of us could ever stand before God in our own righteousness but all in Christ are made the righteousness of God (CP Ro 5:8-21; 2Cor 5:21).

Jesus Christ is the only man who ever lived who was without sin. Every other person has sinned and come short of God's glory (CP Ro 3:10, 23; 5:12; He 4:14-15). That is why Jesus is the only one who can save us, and why we need to be born again to be saved. But we must always remember that whilst we become born again believers on our way to heaven from the moment we first become converted to Christ, that is only the first step in our life-long Christian walk. As we learned earlier regeneration, or the new birth, is an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit within us that requires our complete surrender to the Lordship of Jesus and the authority of His word (CP Jn 3:5). Many Christians believe that the water Jesus refers to here alludes to water baptism, but it does not. If it did Jesus would be teaching baptismal regeneration - that we can only be saved through water baptism - but He is not teaching that

at all. Scriptures teach that we are saved by the word, not water (CP Psa 119:9). We are born again by God's word, and it is only by continuing obedient to the word and resisting all the immoral influences characterising the ungodly world system in which we live that we can cleanse our way (CP Isa 55:1-7).

This is an open invitation for *whosoever will* to partake of the salvation benefits God has provided for us, but an essential prerequisite is a genuine spiritual hunger and thirst for forgiveness and a right relationship with God (CP 1Cor 1:17-18, 21). Paul clearly teaches here that it is the word of God - the gospel -that saves, not water baptism. Paul is not minimising Jesus' teaching concerning water baptism but rather is stressing the fact that he was ordained of God to preach the word for salvation, not to baptise new converts (CP Eph 5:25-26). We get a much clearer understanding here of what being born of water means. Christ is sanctifying the Church, setting it apart and cleansing it, making it pure and holy unto Himself by the word - the gospel. So we can see that it is not being immersed in water that saves, but being immersed in the word (CP 1Pe 1:23-25). This is virtually the same teaching as Eph 5:25-26. Men are saved by the word alone. Every human endeavour, and the corrupt world system will be judged by God's word CP Rev 21:5-6). This is Christ Himself speaking. He promises that whoever thirsts for knowledge of Him, He will give them to drink of the water of life. (This is a similar teaching to Isa 55:1-7. All who hunger and thirst for Christ will be saved (CP Jn 4:5-14).

The water given by Christ means spiritual life (CP Isa 12:3). But to partake of the spiritual life in Christ we need to be continually drinking of the living water. The word *drinketh* is a present tense continuous action verb (it is called a present imperative in the Greek). It means that drinking of the water is not a momentary single act but is a progressive or repeated drinking. It is an action in progress, or repeated. It is very important to know that because what it teaches us is that drinking of the water of life requires regular communion with the source of the living water, Jesus Christ Himself. No one can continue to drink of the water of life if he or she becomes severed or separated from its source. That means we are not eligible for the salvation benefits in Christ if we are no longer abiding in Him, or His word is abiding in us. To sum up, our membership in God's family remains conditional on our love for Christ demonstrated by a life of sincere obedience to His word throughout our earthly existence (CP Jn 14:15, 21-23 with 1Jn 2:3-6). Just as we can be born again unto everlasting life by the Spirit of God, we can also extinguish that life by ungodly choices and unrighteous living (CP Ro 6:1-23; 8:12-14; 2Ti 2:11-12).