

Restored Truth Bible Study #10 - Begotten July 6, 2013

John 3 begins with a most fascinating exchange between Jesus Christ and a Pharisee named Nicodemus. It is a very serious conversation, yet somewhat humorous. Nicodemus must have been afraid of his peers because he came to Christ secretly by night. (vs 1) *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. (vs 2) This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi... [Teacher.] we know... [Referring to the Pharisees] that you are teacher come from God: for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. (vs 3) Jesus answered and said to him, Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Christ is making a very important point which many in the world of traditional Christianity fail to understand. It is a point that clearly needs to be understood in order to understand God's plan of salvation. First, examine the meaning of the word 'born'. In the Greek this word means to procreate, specifically in reference to the father; and by extension it can also apply to the mother. Figuratively, it means to regenerate or to beget.

The word 'again' in the Greek means from above, by analogy from the first, or by implication it can mean anew. It's important to understand that the word 'again' does reference another birth, but its Greek meaning shows the direction from where the birth comes. This is important going further into this bible study. Understand there are two words here, with two different meanings. They mean something when you put them together, but they are still two words, with two different meanings.

The word 'cannot' in the Greek is a combination of two words. It simply means it's not possible; it's 'absolutely not' possible. So, unless one is born again, it's 'absolutely not' possible to be in God's kingdom.

The word 'see' means literally or figuratively, to see. By implication it can mean to know, to perceive, or know intuitively. It's the Greek word 'oida', which is different from the Greek word 'ginosko', a word which means to know by experience. This type of knowing or seeing comes intuitively, through the use of one's mind.

The Kingdom of God here is the same kingdom Christ came into Galilee preaching. Mark 1:14 *After John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee preaching...[proclaiming] the gospel of the kingdom of God...[The same kingdom Christ was talking about with Nicodemus] and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.*

Nicodemus didn't understand specifically what Christ was talking about. John 3:4 *He said to him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?... [Obviously Nicodemus understood Christ was talking about being born again, a second time, a second birth. But in Nicodemus' mind he is thinking about a physical birth. Christ tries to clarify his thinking and says:] Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

The word 'born' that Nicodemus uses in verse four, and Christ uses in verse five, is the Greek word 'gennao', which is (1080) in Strong's Concordance. Christ said a person cannot be born again, unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Clearly Christ is reemphasizing the same point He made in verse three. The word 'cannot' is the same word; it's 'absolutely not' possible. Then Christ makes a distinction for Nicodemus between a physical birth and the other birth He is talking about:] (vs 6) *That which is born of flesh is flesh; that which is born of Spirit is spirit.*

Right here, Christ is speaking of two different births. There is a physical birth of flesh; and a spiritual birth.

Paul makes the same point by phrasing it a little differently; but it's still the same point. 1 Cor. 15:50 *This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...[If you're a flesh and blood human being, you cannot enter into God's kingdom] nor does corruption inherit incorruption. (vs 53) For this corruptible...[Referring to the physical human body] must put on incorruption...[Referring to a spiritual body] and this mortal must put on immortality.* In other words, this temporary physical life has to be changed to an immortal spirit life, changed from a life that has an ending to a life that has no ending. God's kingdom clearly is being shown in God's word. It is not a kingdom for physical human beings. Yet this is not what is taught in the world of traditional Christianity. What people are actually taught is that God's kingdom is here on the earth now; and if you become part of the church, you can become part of that kingdom. Both Christ and Paul make it very clear human beings cannot become

part of God's kingdom. To do so requires a second and a different birth, one that is of a spiritual nature, not a physical nature.

John 3:7 Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again... The word 'marvel' here means to wonder, to admire. Don't be surprised Nicodemus at what I have told you. Clearly, Nicodemus didn't understand what Christ was talking about. He compared becoming part of God's kingdom to being born. To understand what Christ was telling Nicodemus requires an understanding of the elements involved in the birth of a human being. This is the means by which Christ was teaching Nicodemus about becoming part of the Kingdom of God. Christ is not talking about a physical birth but using physical birth to illustrate spiritual birth.

Now take a few minutes to look at the elements of human birth. First, the beginning of any human being should occur within the confines of a marriage. This involves the commitment a man and woman make to one another for the remainder of their physical lives. Why is it necessary to emphasize this point? Because this is a world that does not value marriage and the proper use of sex. Young people who engage in casual sex, deal with more emotional, esteem and anxiety problems than those who refrain from premarital sexual activity. God intended children be born through sexual relations that occur between husband and wife. A child's existence begins with the release of the father's sperm into the mother. The sperm finds its way out of all thousands that are released to one egg released by the mother each month. That one egg is called an ovum. When the sperm and the ovum join together, a child is conceived. From conception, a baby begins to develop. Initially the early stage of development of the child is called an embryo. After the first trimester, the embryo becomes a fetus and continues to develop. Once the baby is fully developed, it is born.

It's important to understand that the ovum and the sperm can never become a human being on their own. The two must be joined together. The sperm puts the process into motion. When a sperm joins with an ovum, a child is begotten by its father. This is important to understand in relation to being spiritually begotten. It is the father who begets children in the birth of children. This does not make the fathers role more important than the mothers. Both have an important role in the birth of children. But if there is no sperm placed into motion, the egg will just stay there and be discarded through the menstrual cycle. Without the sperm women would never have children. With this explanation of human birth, look back at John 3.

In John 3:5 Christ says: *Most assuredly I say to you, Nicodemus, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* Christ's words lay out the beginning elements of spiritual birth to Nicodemus. It must be understood before these spiritual elements of water and spirit come together that something else has to occur first. This element is also found in the gospel of John.

This is the important start of being born again. In John 6:44 Christ says: *No one can come to me, unless the father who sent me draws him: and I will raise him up at the last day...* [No one can truly come to Jesus Christ, to understand what He taught, to understand His message, to understand what it means to follow Christ; unless God the Father calls a person. Christ again makes this point.] (vs 65) *Therefore I said to you, that no one can come to me unless it has been granted to him by my Father.* God the Father is the origin of someone being born again. How does God the Father begin this begettal process?

Everything initiates from the Father when it comes to being spiritually born again. God calls through His message of the gospel. Once the message has been heard, a response to it must occur in order to respond to it in the right way. Christ said in Mark 1:15: *The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe in the gospel.* The word 'repent' here means to think differently, or afterwards to think differently. After what? After hearing the gospel message. It also means to reconsider, or morally to feel compunction, or remorse. To understand the gospel message of the kingdom of God and respond to it through repentance; requires a person to look inward and realize they are not doing what God expects. This is where repentance comes in. The second thing for a person must do is believe, to have faith in, upon, or with respect to a person, or thing, to credit, or to entrust one's spiritual well-being to Christ.

In other words, there's a mental process that goes on between the ears that says "I need to do this." So, it starts out with things such as working on Saturday, stop working on Saturday; or being involved in any types of behaviors of vice, stop doing these. It requires following God's way of life by keeping the Sabbath and the rest of God's commandments. This is belief. How can a person believe in something if action is not taken to do it? Once a person hears God's calling through the message of the gospel and takes the time to prove it is correct, then a course of action must be taken to properly respond. The proper response necessitates a change from the way a person has been living, to living a life guided by the Bible.

Following the proper response to the gospel message, what actions then are necessary for a person to be born again?

In his first sermon, in Acts 2:37, Peter moved his audience to ask: *What shall we do?*...[How shall we respond to your message? Peter responded:] *Repent*...[The same word Christ used for responding to his message in Mark 1:15] *Repent*...[To think differently about one's life after hearing God's Truth] *Be baptized*...[To make overwhelmed, or to become fully wet. This is complete immersion in water. Baptism is an outward demonstration of one's acknowledgement to put away the old way of living, the old person and start living life differently according to God's Word, the new person. After baptism, Peter said to receive the Holy Spirit.] *Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission or forgiveness of sin*...[Notice the order of steps in this process] *and you shall receive the gift of Holy Spirit*. The word 'receive' means to take. God is offering opportunity, but it is one that must be taken by the person it is being offered to. This shows the action involved on the part of the person in this process. Remember Acts 5:32 says God gives His Spirit to those who obey Him. Obedience is action.

Of course, God does not force anybody to obey Him. He simply says this is My Way of Life. Do it and live; don't do it and die. It's a choice people must make.

Embodied in Peter's words are the initial steps to being born again. These three steps are also the initial steps of God's Holy Day plan of salvation for mankind. Repentance deals with the Passover; baptism deals with becoming unleavened, getting rid of sin; and Pentecost involves receiving the Holy Spirit. The importance of these steps is going to become more apparent towards the end of this Bible Study. If a person does not go through these steps, that person cannot become part of God's Kingdom. It's just that simple. Now, understand how these initial steps apply in the process of being spiritually born again.

In understanding the Greek word 'gennao', there is an important point that needs to be acknowledged when studying the Bible. Any reading and study of the Bible must be done in the context of what is being said. Context is key. In Strong's Concordance, this particular word has different definitions. In going to the various places where 'gennao' is used, the context is 'key' in determining which definition applies. The context of the scripture is important for us to know in order to grasp the scope of what is

being said in connection with the phrase 'born again'.

Let's notice the difference between the two primary definitions of begot and born. Remember, in the human process of development, a child is begotten by the father when the sperm enters the mother, and that one sperm joins with the ovum. That's when the child is begotten. Nine months later the mother delivers the child. That is when it is born. In between those two events is the development of the child, the growth. It begins with its head followed by its arms and legs and then the fingers and toes. It's a miraculous process which takes place between begetting and birth. In the Bible the word 'gennao' is used for both things. Let's notice a couple of scriptures where this word 'gennao' is used in the context of begetting and in the context of being born.

Matthew starts off with the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Notice where that genealogy begins.

Matt.1:1 *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham...* [There's a lot of history covered in that one verse. It's going from Jesus Christ all the way back to Abraham. Then you get the specifics. Verse two starts out:] (vs 2) *Abraham begot Isaac; Isaac begot Jacob; Jacob begot Judah...* [Notice it says:] *and his brothers...* [Remember Jacob had four wives, two wives and two hand maids or concubines. Four different women delivered all his sons. He begot all those children. In other words, his sperm was responsible for connecting with the ovum of each mother so that children could be developed and born. Jacob begot those children] (vs 6) *Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary of whom...* [Or from whom] *was born Jesus who was called Christ.* Joseph didn't beget Christ, did he? NO, he did not.

The word 'begot' in verse 2 and the word 'born' in verse 16 are the same word 'gennao'. In verse 2 it is not talking about Isaac, Jacob or Jacob's sons being born, it's telling who is responsible for giving life. In verse 16, it says Christ was born from Mary, speaking about Christ's actual birth. These scriptures illustrate how important context in the use of the word 'gennao'. This is important in the continuation of this bible study. There is one other place in which 'gennao' is used in a different context.

1 John 5:18 *We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself and the wicked one does not touch him.* [Context is key in this verse. When it says:] *We know that whoever is born of God does not sin...* [It's referring to a person that's perfect. So, the first use of 'born' refers to actually being born. But the second one where it says:] *and he who has been born of*

God keeps himself and the wicked one does not touch him...[The word 'keeps' means to guard one's actions. It's speaking of a person not yet been born of God who is still capable of committing sin. In this case 'gennao' means begotten. This verse can be reread as:] *We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been begotten of God keeps himself and the wicked one does not touch him.*

There is no need to guard oneself when perfect, there is no sin present. So, if a person does not sin, they are perfect; they have already been born of God. But if they are having to guard themselves so that they don't sin, they are not yet born of God. They are just begotten.

In Acts 7:29 this is speaking of Moses and his two sons. *Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian...*[Moses had to flee Egypt because he had killed an Egyptian who was roughing up one of his Hebrew brethren.] *where he had two sons.* The word 'had' as used in the New King James is the word 'gennao'. Moses was a man. He could not have those two sons in Midian by himself. He begot those sons in the Midian and his wife delivered those sons in Midian.

Notice in Matt. 1:20 who actually did beget Christ in Mary. This was a miracle. God the Father didn't come down here and manifest Himself as a human being to have sex with Mary. People find the details surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ hard to understand. *But while he thought about these things...*[Joseph is getting ready to marry Mary and he knows she is pregnant. He doesn't want to embarrass her and wants to put her away quietly so he can go on with his life] *and while he was thinking, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife for that which is conceived in her is of Holy Spirit...*[The word 'conceived' is the word 'gennao' which means beget, or in this case, begotten. Christ is already developing inside Mary at this point] *and she will bring forth a son...*[So Christ has not yet been born] *and you shall call his name Jesus and he will save his people from their sins.* God the Father begot Jesus in Mary through the Holy Spirit.

Now look at the word 'born', as it relates to when Jesus Christ was actually born. Matt. 2:1 *After Jesus was born...*[Again the word 'gennao' is used.] *in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem.* Christ had already been born several months before the wise men came to Jerusalem.

Acts 22:3 tells about the birthplace of Paul. *I am indeed a Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia.* It's very important to understand the distinctions in the use of 'gennao' and how important context is to understand what the Bible is saying.

So, the context of 'gennao' is important in knowing whether it refers to a child being begotten by the father or being born from the mother. Christ was begotten by God the Father.

This Restored Truth Bible Study #10 and Restored Truth Bible Study #11 to follow, are part one and part two about the process of being born again. When put together these two Bible Studies provide a complete picture of being born again.

Heb. 1:5 *For to which of the angels did he...[That's the Father.] ever say, you are my Son, today I have begotten you?* This is God the Father speaking to Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:1 *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone who loves him who begot also loves him who is begotten of him...*[What do we have here? First of all you need to understand that the first use of the word 'born' should be translated 'begotten'.] *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and everyone who loves him who begot...*[Referring to God the Father] *also loves him who is begotten of him.* Referring another person, begotten by God. The word 'gennao' is used three times in this one verse. One is born but that doesn't convey what really John is saying. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, then you are begotten of God (the individual called by God); and you love him (God the Father) who begot you; and you also love him (someone else) who is begotten of the Father. God the Father is the one who begets true Christians.

1 John 4:7 *Beloved, let us also love one another: for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God...*[It should be better translated-] *everyone who loves is begotten of God, and knows God.*

Look at how God the Father begets people. Referring to Mark 1, God the Father begets people through the hearing the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Paul illustrates this process in Romans 10 where he inserts the word faith in place of using the word gospel.

Rom. 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing...*[You have to hear the message of God first in order to be able to have faith, that body of knowledge] *and hearing by the word of God.* The gospel message is the word of God. Remember, Christ said I've not come down to speak my own words, but to speak the words the Father gave to me or commanded me to speak. It's very important not to read over that casually. The gospel message came from God the Father.

In 1 Cor. 4:15 Paul says: *For though you might have 10,000 instructors in Christ yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you...*[Notice-] *through the gospel.* Who is the father in the faith for those of the Church of God today? It is Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Through his work people of the Philadelphia era were begotten by God. This would also include those who have been begotten after his death. No one in God's Church would understand the gospel without the work God did through Mr. Armstrong. This is how the Father begets people. He uses His word and those He has task to instruct others. It's not some ethereal concept. It takes time; it takes effort; it's a lot of hard work for someone to become begotten by God.

Notice what Paul says in Phi. 1:10 about Onesimus. In writing to Philemon, Paul says: *I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten...*[Notice] *while in my chains.* This not talking about a physical begettal, this is a spiritual begettal. This happened while Paul was in prison. Hearing and following God's word – notice - does not change the physical state of a person. In other words, when one is spiritually begotten, that person does not automatically become a spirit being. One remains a human being, just as a begotten child inside its mother grows and develops until time for delivery. So, the true Christian grows and develops until it is time for their delivery. This delivery will be covered in Restored Truth Bible Study #11.

1 John 2:28 speaks to the time prior to one's spiritual delivery. *And now, little children, abide in him, and when he appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (vs 29) If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born...[Or begotten] of him.*

1 John 3:9 points to the delivery of spiritual begotten child of God. *Whoever has been born of God does not sin...*[This means perfection has been achieved.] *for his seed remains in him and he cannot sin,*

because he has been born of God. This verse points to the actual delivery and time after the delivery of a child of God.

So, 1 John 2:29 describes life as a begotten child of God, while 1 John 3:9 deals with an actual child born of God.

1 John 5:18 brings the process together. This is where 1 John 2:29 and 1 John 3:9 come together. *We know that whoever is born of God does not sin...*[They are perfect.] *but he who has been born...*[begotten.] *of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.* One begotten by God the Father into the Church of God remains an imperfect human, working to grow and develop the very character of God. God's people are in this process of development now. They are not yet born of God.

John 16:33 are very encouraging words Christ gave His disciples before offering up His prayer to the Father in John 17. These were Christ's final words to His disciples before His arrest. *These things I have spoken to you. that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation...*[pressure, We will as human beings have pressure in this world] *but be of good cheer I have overcome the world.* Christ shows us it is possible to overcome the world; He shows us how and He helps us to overcome. Notice John's words in 1 John 5.

Those called and begotten by God must overcome in this world. 1 John 5:4 *For whatever is born...*[begotten] *Whatever is begotten of God overcomes the world.* [If one is already born into God's family, there is no need to overcome. Perfection has been achieved.] *And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.* This is one's belief; one's willingness to follow and do what God says to do. Remember, faith is believing what God says and doing what God says.

These words in Rev 2:25 are directed at human beings, in God's Church, begotten by God the Father. *But hold fast what you have till I come.* This is the same word Christ uses with Philadelphians.

Rev. 2:26 *He who overcomes, and keeps my works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations. (vs 27) He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessel: as I also have received from my Father.*

In Rev. 3:21 Christ says: *To him who overcomes...*[To the spiritually begotten Christian] *I will grant to sit with me on my throne as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father on his throne.* Christ is talking to human beings in God's Church, begotten by the Father with His Spirit, who must grow and overcome, and develop spiritually to the point where they can be born into God's family. God's Word is truly clear that those God calls are merely begotten by Him, through His Spirit dwelling in them.

God's begotten children are to grow and develop within the safe confines of God's Church. This requires knowing what God's word says. When trouble arises within God's Church, the only anchor a person has is what God's Word says, and it must be followed, regardless of what others may say.

Examine and prove whether this bible study is true!!! Look up each scripture to see how the word 'gennao' is used. By doing so, the person who does will not be misled by the foolishness of false doctrine that is presented at the end of this study for comparison to God's Truth. Spiritual growth and development in this lifetime now must continue to the end of physical life or Christ's return. That is exactly what Christ said to God's Church in Revelation 2 & 3. He makes the same point in Matthew 24:13. Remember, these verses tell the disciples what to expect after Christ ascends into heaven. It was to be a very rough period of time for those in God's Church. Nevertheless, Christ says that he who endures to the end shall be saved. It is only through resurrection that a person will be born into God's family, except for the small number to be changed at the 7th trumpet (I Cor. 15:51-52).

Understand now, what begotten is not. At the end of these bible studies, an examination of the authoritative texts of traditional Christianity have been provided. This has been done to provide a comparison between what God's Word says and what this world's religions teach. To make this comparison, "The catechism of the Catholic Church" has been selected.

It is very hard to find anything in the catechism about a person being begotten by God. To make a fair comparison it will be helpful to look at the Catholic Church's first three sacraments. These pertain to a new convert coming into the Catholic Church.

To become part of God's Church the three steps are repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Spirit. But in the Catholic Church, the three steps are baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist.

The first sacrament is baptism.

From Section 1213:

Holy baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God. We become members of Christ, are incorporated into the church, and made sharers in her mission. Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, through water, in the word.

Section 1263:

By baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin, and all personal sins, as well as, all punishment for sin; and those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest which is separation from God.

The second sacrament is confirmation.

Section 1285:

Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of confirmation together constitute the sacraments of Christian initiation, whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For by the sacrament of confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the church and are enriched with the special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

Section 1302:

It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

The third sacrament is the Eucharist.

Section 1322:

The holy Eucharist completes initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by baptism, and configured more deeply to Christ by confirmation, participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is;

Section 1323:

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his body and blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages, until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved spouse, the church, a memorial of his death and resurrection, a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed. The mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

It's important to understand that in the Catholic Church, when one partakes of the bread and wine, it is taught the individual is literally partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This is not what the Bible teaches. Jesus Christ used bread and wine to symbolically represent His body and blood.

Section 1419:

Having passed from this world to the Father, Christ gives us in the Eucharistic, the pledge of glory with him. Participation in the holy sacrifice identifies us with his heart, sustains our strength along the pilgrimage of this life, makes us long for eternal life, and unites us even now to the church in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints.

Catholicism begins with baptism, but in God's Church, baptism is step number two. Confirmation for Catholics is the receiving of the Holy Spirit. In God's Church receiving the Holy Spirit is step number three. Catholicism equates the Eucharist with what God's Church calls the Passover. It is the third step for Catholics, in God's Church, this is first step. Catholic teaching is inconsistent with what Christ and the apostles taught about the process of being born again.

Notice now, how God's Church corrupted the teaching of born again. Understand how the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) corrupted the minds of people following Mr. Armstrong's death.

Compare this statement from the August 25, 1986, Worldwide News, which comes from an article entitled *God Restored These 18 Truths. How thankful are you for them?* This statement reflects the understanding God's Church had about born again shortly after Mr. Armstrong's death.

"God is a family into which we may be born, and when we are born of God, we will not be able to sin."

Is this statement consistent with the Bible's teaching on born again? Yes, it is. This a true statement.

But one must be careful when ministers start saying they need to 'redefine' a specific Church doctrine, as Pastor General, Joseph W. Tkach did in the "Personal" section of the January 28, 1991, Worldwide News.

"The Church must now redefine its explanation on the verb 'gennao'."

Red flags should start going up when ministers think they must redefine foundational Church doctrine. Mr. Tkach continued:

"Mr. Armstrong knew that 'gennao' is often translated in the King James as begotten, but because begotten was used of the Father, Mr. Armstrong used this term as if it were a counterpart of conceived. Begotten is an archaic word in English, and Mr. Armstrong was not aware of this misunderstanding of its definition. The correct definition of begotten, however, and the one used in the days of King James, is not solely the father's role in conception; but always includes the birth. In other words, if a man has begotten a child, he has actually received or gotten the child. (In other words, you are holding that little baby in your arms) on the other hand, if his wife experiences a miscarriage, he has not begotten the child. (In other words if the child is not born the child is not begotten by the father)."

Mr. Tkach's disparaging tone toward Mr. Armstrong is grossly incorrect and highly disrespectful. Keep in mind that Mr. Tkach would not have understood anything about the Bible had God not used Mr. Armstrong to teach him.

Mr. Tkach takes the need to 'redefine' this doctrinal teaching in order to completely change it 2 1/2 years later, in a sermon entitled, "*The Point of Light*," delivered in August 1993.

"What does 'gennao' mean? Does 'gennao' mean conception, or does 'gennao' mean born again? Well, I'll tell you. I am here to tell you on the authority of Jesus Christ that 'gennao' means to be born from above."

Compare Mr. Tkach's explanation of 'gennao' with what Mr. Armstrong said in his sermon entitled, "*Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era*," on December 17, 1983. He only made one statement about this topic. See for yourself, if he understood the meaning of 'gennao.'

"And the fact that we are begotten now, you are not born yet, only begotten."

Mr. Armstrong knew exactly what he was talking about. He knew the meaning of 'gennao' and applied its correct use in explaining the Bible's teaching on born again. On the authority of Jesus Christ, Mr. Armstrong was clearly right; and Mr. Tkach was clearly wrong. With the exception of Christ, no one has yet been born from above, only begotten. Those who will become part of God's firstfruit are waiting to be born again.