

Have You Been Born Again, Or Are You Still Blind and Naked?

The old Worldwide Church of God, under the rule of Hebert W. Armstrong, taught that you are not born again at baptism, but rather you are conceived in the womb, and you will not be born again until the first resurrection. This teaching has continued to be taught by many of the offshoots of the old Worldwide Church.

Let's understand the plain simple truth on this subject. The womb is a place of complete darkness; therefore if you are merely conceived in the womb, and not born again, then you are living in darkness. That does not fit the Biblical narrative that says, God "...has called you **out of darkness into His marvelous light**" (1 Peter 2:9). A baby does not see light until it is born.

Whether we are born again or merely conceived is not just a matter of semantics. What a church teaches is a revelation of its relationship with God. The Bible uses many analogies to teach Biblical truths, and the birth process is one of them. We shall see that God's holy days follow the pattern of the birth process.

The Womb Symbolizes the World

The developing fetus lives in a bag of water called the amniotic sac, which contains the amniotic fluid. The amniotic fluid is composed primarily of water, but also contains proteins, carbohydrates, electrolytes and other components that are necessary for the proper development of the fetus. The developing fetus is of course naked, and it lives in complete darkness.

The womb symbolizes the world from which a person must be brought forth if he is to enter into the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, "...Except a man **be born** of **water** and of the **Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). When is a person born of water and the Spirit? "...Repent [3340, *to change one's mind or purpose*], and be **baptized** [*water*]...for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the **Holy Spirit**" (Acts 2:38).

When you are baptized, you do not stay in the water, but you come up and out of the water. What does the water symbolize? "And the earth was [*became*] without form [8414, *formlessness, confusion*], and void [922, *emptiness*]; and **darkness** [2822, *figuratively, misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness*] was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the **waters**" (Genesis 1:2).

The waters represent the people of the earth, who are in spiritual darkness, and therefore they are spiritually empty and in confusion, i.e. they are in Babylon. The meaning of the name Babylon is confusion. The king of Babylon is "...that old serpent, called the Devil [1228, *false accuser*], and Satan [4567, *the adversary*], which deceives [4105, *to cause to wander*] the **whole world**..." (Revelation 12:9). Satan is called "...the god of this world [*who*] has blinded the minds of them

which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ...should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The system that Satan uses to deceive the world is called Mystery Babylon. She is “...the great whore that **sits on many waters**: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication [4203, *practice idolatry*], and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication [4202, *unfaithfulness, idolatry*]....The **waters**...where the whore sits, are **peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues**” (Revelation 17:1, 2, 15).

The whole world has been led away from God’s light, and into darkness. “And God said, Let there be **light: and there was light**. And God saw the light that it was good [2896, *pleasant, agreeable, beautiful*]: and God divided [914, *to separate*] **the light from the darkness**” (Genesis 1:3, 4). The separation of light from darkness represents God separating His people from the darkness of this world and bringing them into His light.

“... God is **light**, and in Him is **no darkness at all**. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and **walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth**; but if we **walk in light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin**” (1 Jn. 1:5-7).

In order to walk in God’s light we must be born again, because “That which is born of the flesh is flesh...” (John 3:6). Those “...who are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they who are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the mind of the flesh is hostile to God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then **they who are in the flesh cannot please God**” (Romans 8:5-8).

The flesh represents the sinful nature in man. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of **sinful flesh**, and by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, **who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**” (Romans 8:3, 4).

Nakedness symbolizes the sinful nature in man. The fetus is naked, and is blind, and lives in water. To walk in the Spirit requires a new birth, for “...Except a man be born again [509, *from above*] he cannot see [1492, *to know, to find, perceive, understand*] the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). A new birth is required in order for man to grasp spiritual realities.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the New Birth

Egypt, like Babylon, represents the darkness of this world. When Israel was in bondage in Egypt, they were brought out of Egypt through blood and water. These events are pictured by the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Leaven symbolizes sin (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). The number seven represents completion and sanctification. The seven days of unleavened bread

picture the complete removal of sin by blood and water, which is sanctification. "...**Repent** [*blood*], and **be baptized** [*water*]...in the name of **Jesus Christ** [*the Passover sacrifice*] for the **remission** [859, *deliverance, pardon, complete forgiveness*] of sins..." (Acts 2:38).

The first step in salvation is repentance, which requires humility. In a normal birth, the fetus will prepare itself for the birth process by turning in the womb, so that it is head and face down when it is born. The head and face down position represents humility, as in bowing before someone. "...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

Turning in the womb represents repentance. The Eternal says, "... I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from **his way** and live: **turn you, turn you from your evil ways**; for why will ye die O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11). After the children of Israel were given final instructions for Passover, "... the people **bowed the head and worshiped** [7812, *to prostrate in homage to God*]. The children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded ..." (Exodus. 12:27, 28).

After the fetus turns, it will move lower in the womb as it prepares for birth. There are three stages of labor: the opening of the cervix, descent and birth of the baby, and the delivery of the placenta.

The opening of the cervix is pictured by the door at Passover. The children of Israel were to kill the Passover, and then they were to "...take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it" (Exodus 12:7). God said, "...when I see the blood, I will pass over you..." (Exodus 12:13).

"And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt...And Pharaoh rose up in the night... And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people..." (Exodus 12:29-31). The door has been opened, and the people can now begin their journey out of the darkness of sin, just as a baby begins its journey out of the darkness of the womb, through the birth canal.

The door represents Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the **door**: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved..." (John 10:9). After Jesus was dead on the cross, "...one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out **blood and water**" (John 19:34). Blood and water are two elements of the birth process.

The first stage of the delivery is the opening of the door, i.e. the cervix. Now the second stage begins, when the mother begins to push the baby out of her womb. "And the Egyptians were **urgent** [2388, *to seize, to force*] upon the people that they might **send them out of the land in haste** [4116, *quick, prompt*]..." (Exodus 12:33).

The Egyptians were trying to push the Israelites out of Egypt as quickly as possible, thus fulfilling what God had said to Moses, that Pharaoh, "...will let you go hence: when he shall let

you go, he shall surely thrust you out [1644, *cast out, drive out*] hence completely” (Exodus 11:1).

During the birth process the baby is being thrust out of the womb. Labor is painful, and the woman giving birth wants the baby out of her womb as quickly as possible, so she pushes during the birth process. The Egyptians wanted Israel out of their land as quickly as possible, so they were pushing them out.

Israel did not complete the process of coming out of Egypt until they had crossed the Red Sea on the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. On the night of the seventh day the Eternal “... caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind **all that night**, and made the sea dry land, **and the waters were divided**” (Exodus 14:21). The dividing of the waters corresponds to the breaking of the amniotic sac.

When Israel crossed the sea, “... the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left” (v. 22). The wall of water that was on both sides of the people represents **the birth canal**. Israel completed the crossing of the sea at night, and “... the sea returned to his strength when the morning [1242, *dawn*] appeared ...” (v. 27).

While the fetus is in the birth canal, it is in darkness. When the baby comes out of the birth canal, it sees light for the first time. When the dawn appeared, Israel was completely out of the sea, i.e. the birth canal. They were now completely out of the darkness of Egypt (sin). They were completely pure, having been cleansed of all contaminants through blood and water.

On the second day of creation God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God...divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament...And God called the firmament heaven...” (Genesis 1:6-8). The water that went upward was distilled water which had left all contaminants behind. This symbolizes those who have been made free from sin through blood and water.

The Death of the Old Man and His Deeds

Now the third stage of the birth process takes place, which is the delivery of the placenta. The placenta is a vascular organ that develops in the uterus during pregnancy, and provides the developing fetus with nutrients, and expels waste through the umbilical cord. Following birth the placenta is no longer needed, and it is expelled as part of the afterbirth. The placenta dies, and is discarded.

The “...sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared...and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea” (Exodus 14:27). The Egyptians, as a type of the old man, were “...dead upon the seashore [8193, *lip, edge, termination as a natural boundary*]” (v. 30). This symbolizes the “...old man with his deeds [4234, *practice*]” (Colossians 3:9). The old man is no

longer needed; therefore he is discarded. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, **that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.** For he that is dead is freed from sin” (Romans 6:6, 7).

This is the new birth, for “... if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [2937, *creation*]: **old things are passed away** [3928, *perished*]; **all things are become new**” (2 Corinthians 5:17). **Old things do not pass away at conception.** At birth the old things pass away, and the baby enters into a completely new environment. The baby has been liberated from the womb, i.e. the house of darkness, and has entered a new environment of light. The Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures the birth of the baby through blood and water. The next phase of the birth process is pictured by the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost.

The Breath of Life

When the baby comes forth from the womb, it must begin to breathe in order to live. After His resurrection, when Jesus was with His disciples, “...**He breathed** [1720, *to blow or breathe into, to inflate*] **on them,** and said to them, **Receive you the Holy Spirit**” (John. 20:22). They did not receive the Holy Spirit at that time, because if they had, there wouldn’t have been a need for the Day of Pentecost. This event pointed to the Day of Pentecost that was coming.

On the Day of Pentecost, “... there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind [4157, *respiration, wind*, from 4154, *to breathe hard*], and it filled the house where they were sitting.... And they were all filled with the **Holy [Spirit]...**” (Acts 2:2, 4).

The Greek word used for “wind” (4157) is used in the *Septuagint* for the Hebrew 5397, *wind, breath*. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed [5301, *to blow*] into his nostrils **the breath** [5397] **of life,** and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). The breath of life given to man at creation was a type of the Holy Spirit given to man on Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit is symbolized by wind, or breath. As breath is vital for man to live physically, the Holy Spirit is vital for eternal life. When the baby comes forth out of the womb, it takes its first breath of life. A fetus does not breathe in the womb. The breathing process begins **after it is born.** When a newborn Christian comes up out of the water, he receives the life-giving Spirit.

Hearing Intelligently and Sight

While in the womb the fetus is blind. It doesn’t realize that it is blind because it has never seen anything but blackness. Until God calls a person out of the darkness of this world, and gives him the gift of His Spirit, he is spiritually blind and cannot hear the Word intelligently. “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their **ears heavy,** and **shut their eyes;** lest they see with their eyes, and **hear** with their ears, and **understand** with their heart, and convert [7725, *turn back, return*], and be healed” (Isaiah 6:10).

After being born, the baby sees light for the very first time. On the Day of Pentecost, “... there

appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of **fire** [4442, *fire, lightning*] and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy [*Spirit*] ..." (Acts 2:3, 4). Fire provides light, and the Holy Spirit provides light. "For you were once **darkness**, but now you are **light** in the Lord: walk as children of **light**: for the fruit of the **light** [or *Spirit*, in some manuscripts] is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Ephesians 5:8, 9).

While in the womb, the fetus cannot understand the sounds that it may hear. After the baby is born, it will begin to understand the spoken word. "And in that day shall the deaf **hear** [8085, *to hear intelligently*] **the words of the book**, and the **eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness**" (Isaiah 29:18).

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the newborn Christian now has the ability to both see and hear intelligently, which enables him "... to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..." (2 Peter 3:18). Hearing allows for the development of faith. "So then faith cometh by **hearing, and hearing by the word of God**" (Romans 10:17).

Cover Your Nakedness

The flesh symbolizes sin. "...God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). While in the womb, the fetus is naked. Nakedness symbolizes sin. Jesus told the church at Laodicea "... to buy of Me ... white raiment, that you may be clothed, and the **shame of your nakedness do not appear ...**" (Revelation 3:18).

After its birth, the baby will be cleaned up and clothed. Likewise, a newborn Christian is to be clothed with Jesus Christ. "But **put you on** [1746, *to clothe oneself*] the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make not provision for the flesh**, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14). The covering of the sinful flesh takes place at baptism. "For as many of you as **have been baptized** into Christ **have put on** [1746, *to clothe oneself with*] Christ" (Galatians 3:27). You are now a new man, for you "... have **put on** [1746, *to clothe oneself*] the new man, which is renewed in knowledge **after the image of Him that created him**" (Colossians 3:10).

Out of the Womb and into a New Life

As a **newborn** Christian, you are beginning a new way of life. What "... fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what **communion** [2842, *association, community, joint participation, intercourse*] hath **light with darkness?**" (2 Corinthians 6:14). A newborn Christian has been separated from the darkness of this world, but an **unborn fetus is still in darkness, and therefore has not been separated from the darkness of this world.**

Would we rather be **born again**, or do we prefer to live as a fetus in complete darkness? "Wherefore **come out from among them**, and **be you separate** [873, *set off by boundary*], says the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I **will receive** [1523, *invite in, receive with favor*] you,

and will be a Father to you, and you shall be My **sons** and **daughters**, says the Lord Almighty” (vv. 17, 18). Sons and daughters have been brought forth from the womb. “Of His own will begat [616, *bring forth, give birth to (a child), a medical or physical word, marking the close of pregnancy*] He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creation” (James 1:18).

Our worship is now in heaven, “...where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1, 2). Our new life is to focus on things above, instead of earthly things.

“...You are come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the **firstborn** [4416, *Septuagint* for Hebrew 1060, *firstborn* from 1069, *to burst the womb, i.e. to bear*], which are written [583, *enrolled, to inscribe in a register*] in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect [5048, *carry through completely; to accomplish, finish, bring to an end*], and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling...” (Hebrews 12:22-24).

From the Milk of the Word to Solid Food

While in the womb, the fetus is nourished through the umbilical cord. After its birth, the baby will begin to drink milk. “Being born again [313, *to bring forth again*], not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which lives and abides forever...And this is the word which by the gospel is preached to you. Wherefore **laying aside** all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as **newborn** [738, *just born*] **babes** [1025, *infant*] **desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby**” (1 Peter 1:23, 25, 2:1, 2). A newborn baby is no longer fed through the umbilical cord, but it desires its mother’s milk. A fetus **does not drink its mother’s milk in the womb!**

As a child grows and his digestive system develops, he has a need for solid food. Likewise, a Christian should not be satisfied with the milk of the word forever, but he should have a desire for solid food. “For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: **for he is a babe** [3516, *an infant, immature*]. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age [5046, *adult, mature, complete*], those who by reason of use [1838, *habit*] have their senses [145, *faculties of perception, understanding, judgment*] exercised [1128, *trained*] to discern [1253, *distinguish, separate*] both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:13, 14).

The Church that was not Born Again

The description of the church at Laodicea perfectly fits the doctrine that we are not born again, but are merely conceived. Laodicea is described as being “...lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot...” (Revelation 3:16). The fetus lives in lukewarm, i.e. body temperature, water in the amniotic sac. Body temperature water is a perfect environment for a developing baby, but for a

“Christian” to be lukewarm is not a good thing. Cold water is useful and hot water is useful, but lukewarm water is not.

“Because you say, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing...” (v. 17). Laodicea, like a fetus in the womb, has all of its needs taken care of. Because it is self-satisfied, the church at Laodicea does not recognize the deplorable state that it is in. “...You don’t know that you are wretched [5005, *distressed*], and miserable [1652, *in need of mercy*], and poor [4434, *spiritually poor*], and **blind**, and **naked**” (v. 17).

The fetus is in lukewarm, i.e. body temperature, water. All of its needs are taken care of, so you could say it is self-satisfied. It is also blind and naked. All of this is fine for a fetus, but not so good for a “Christian.” It is an indication of worldliness, and of laziness in overcoming.

Jesus says, “I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment that you may **be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear**, and anoint your eyes with eye salve **that you may see**” (Revelation 3:18). Jesus continues, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man **hear** [191, *be endowed with the faculty of hearing (not deaf)*] **My voice**, and **open the door**, I will come into him, and **will dine with him, and he with Me**” (v. 20).

The putting on of clothing to cover the nakedness, and hearing and seeing are describing being born from above. The door represents the mind, and dining represents feeding on the Word of God, and having an intimate relationship with Him.

“To him who overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the congregations” (v. 22).