

## **YOU CAN BE CHANGED**

### **Preface**

**People often wonder why the world is in such a wicked condition and if there is God, why He allows the things we see Him allow. The Bible does give the answer to this question.**

**By Tommy Lynn Whedbee**

**From the beginning of the world, God has known all His works. God declares the end from the beginning, the things that are not yet done. God is infinitely great in that He can be sovereign and still give man free choices simultaneously. God knows every intricate detail of every life that will ever come into existence. God allows free responses from every person, knows what those responses will be, and yet remains sovereign. God allows a person to respond to Him correctly or wrongly. But God takes the initiative by acting first upon our conscience. God puts within every person a knowledge of his Creator's existence. And God offers the opportunity for every person to draw near and seek Him and this is prompted by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. God does not make changes in Himself in order for a person to draw near and enjoy His presence. But changes in a person must occur before the enjoyment of His presence can be experienced.**

**You are wonderfully made in the image of your Creator, but you have been subjected to a downfall in your human nature. You have a nature that always tends toward sin. Sin is the act of doing what is contrary to love. And God is love.**

**We are separated from God's love because we fail to do that which is of a loving nature. We are born with a nature to sin. We possess a sin nature. A change must occur within us before we can enjoy God and have a loving relationship with Him. God took the initiative to do what is necessary to bring about this change in us. The very Spirit of God must be born in us before we can have His loving relationship. To be born of the Spirit means that we have accepted the truth of our condition, have responded with humility to God's promise, and have received the gift of salvation.**

God's promise is that He has provided the Way for Spiritual Rebirth through the man, Jesus Christ, and that we can respond appropriately and have eternal life in Christ. Our appropriate response is to honestly recognize our sin for its selfish and unloving character and desire to be changed by our God who loves us and wants what is best for us. By believing in His Promise, we can call upon Him finding help to do what is right, and we can confess with our mouth that Jesus is our Lord and our God in human form.

Spiritual Rebirth changes us by allowing the Spirit of God to initiate thoughts and actions in and through us. Righteous actions occur in and through us as we cooperate even though we still battle the desires of our old sin nature. The promise is that God will complete the work He began in us. We will be ultimately and totally delivered from our sin at some point in our future.

Christ, the Eternal Son of God, became Jesus in human flesh at His conception in the virgin Mary. Conceived by the Holy Spirit Jesus became that Holy Child. Jesus, the Second Adam, was perfect because He was fully God and fully man. A perfect man was required to gain back what Adam lost. Adam was made in the image of God but He was not perfect because he was not God. Adam had the capacity to use his free responses in a wrong way. And he did. And so Adam became sin by his own nature and needed restoration. God promised Adam and Eve a perfect man, born of woman, who would save them from their sin. Believing God's promise has always been the Way to eternal life for repentant sinners.

The human nature of Jesus did not possess a sin nature because of His miraculous birth. Jesus was tested to see if He would sin. Jesus learned obedience in that He experienced every trial of man and always responded perfectly. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him in that He remained sinless so that He could bring us peace with God.

The perfect Man, Jesus Christ, was humanity's God-given substitute for Adam and He fulfilled God's promise to Adam and Eve. The perfect Man, God in human flesh, was obedient even to physical death on the Cross. His sinless death condemned sin to its ultimate destruction. And God the Father gave to Jesus the Son all power, authority, and judgment over all creation.

Every sin is a strike of death toward some relationship. Every sin is a strike against "Life." Every sin is a strike against God who is the giver of Life. All sin struck Jesus the God-Man on the cross. The Man side of Jesus felt pain and misery. The Man side of Jesus felt forsaken of God even though Jesus knew the Scripture says that He was not forsaken. Jesus did not sin by thinking that He was truly forsaken. Sin killed Jesus. All sin of all humanity was laid upon Christ crushing His physical body with deadly force. Jesus allowed Himself to be the sin offering. God the Father allowed the physical death of His Son. Sin defeated itself by unjustly killing the sinless Jesus. Jesus arose from death, the perfect man who fulfilled God's promise to Adam and Eve and God's promise to the world. Jesus arose with all authority and power to remove sin, death, Satan, and all wickedness from creation. The process of sin removal is in progress in the lives of those who believe the Promise and receive new birth.

God has a purpose for allowing sin, death, and suffering to come upon all creation. What we are experiencing is the only avenue by which the glory and the love of God can be experienced and revealed in us. Our participation in sin, death, and suffering is necessary and worth the glory which will be revealed to us and in us. Those who believe in Jesus for sin removal and new life in Him are participants in the Cross of Jesus. We died to our sole relationship to Adam and we were born again to a new relationship to the Second Adam and perfect man, Jesus Christ.

The process of our sin removal starts at our new birth and is complete at our glorification. Our death to sin and our new walk in Christ is experienced by our suffering and our striving to be obedient. Acknowledgment of our own sin and recognition of sin in humanity allows us to perceive the glory of God as He defeats sin in us. Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. God's glory is evident by how He orchestrates good in the midst of evil through the intricacies of life. God does not cause evil but He uses evil for divine purposes. All things work together for good to those who love God. So evil must work together for good to the saints of God. The evil act by men of crucifying Jesus was predetermined by God to bring about good for those who come to love Him. We know what is good because we contrast goodness with evil. The sinless death of Jesus condemned sin to its utter destruction. By Jesus overcoming sin, death, and Satan, we praise

Him for what He has done. It is good that we see the glory of God even through the death of His Son. At the cross we see the worst evil ever committed yet we see the entire creation ultimately freed from sin, death, and Satan. Evil works out for good because God has decreed the existence of evil and controls evil for the purpose of bringing about good. In the process of our sanctification, we experience the fruits of the Spirit though our conflict with good and evil. Without this conflict we could not experience love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, and self-control. God has decreed the only way and the only perfect way by which we can experience the fullness of God and this way is in a world containing sin and evil.

At around 3 P.M. on the Cross, Jesus said "it is finished." Jesus finished a sinless life and a sinless death which condemned sin to the fullest and usurped the authority from Satan which Satan had over dominion lost to him by Adam. The finished work of Christ on the Cross gave Him authority to remove all sin, death, and wickedness from creation. Scripture describes this process of deliverance. There is other work of Christ today which is still ongoing. Through His resurrection power, Christ is now saving people from their sins and will ultimately judge and redeem all Heaven and Earth. Romans 8:1-39

1 Corinthians 15:17 **"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins."**

The resurrected Christ is saving people today. The shed blood of Christ gave Him the authority to save you. **His resurrection life is what saves you.** The shed blood without the resurrection saves no one. Romans 5:10b **"Having been reconciled we shall be saved by His life."**

The blood of Christ made possible salvation for anyone who will believe and receive salvation. It requires both the blood (the physical death) and the resurrection of Jesus to save us. What Jesus finished at the cross by itself was not the "end all" for our salvation. Christ arose and is alive today and His resurrection life saves those who believe and justifies God in saving us.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." The work of Christ is not finished until He delivers the Kingdom back to the Father. 1 Corinthians 15:24 **"Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power."**

You will be changed if you are born again having received Christ and His gift of salvation.