

# A Mighty Change of Heart (<http://mightychangeofheart.com>)

---

"And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" Alma 5:14

## Chapter 15 – The Synonyms

### CHAPTER 15

#### THE SYNONYMS

*“And the Lord said unto me; **Marvel not that all mankind, yes, MEN and WOMEN, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be BORN AGAIN:** yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters.” (Mosiah 27:25)*

*There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (John 3:1,2)*

Nicodemus was obviously curious. Perhaps he didn't want his fellow rulers to know that he wanted to talk to Jesus, so he went by night. Did he flatter or was he really sincere? It's hard to tell. He even mentioned the miracles done by Jesus. Perhaps he wanted one done for him. The Lord seemed to pay little attention to his remarks. He changed the subject completely by returning to a basic doctrine and stating a simple gospel fact – one of which Nicodemus was completely ignorant.

*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, **except a man be BORN AGAIN, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***

*Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?*

*Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, He cannot enter into the kingdom of God.***

*That which is born of FLESH is FLESH: and that which is born of the SPIRIT is SPIRIT.*

*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; So is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

*Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? (John 3:3-9)*

Nicodemus was overwhelmed by the simple doctrine. He was one of the authorities of the day and he knew absolutely nothing about being BORN AGAIN. It's tough for a ruler to admit his ignorance but that is exactly what he did. Then the Lord's chastisement continued:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and KNOWEST NOT these things?  
(John 3:10)

When we think of the mission of Jesus Christ we generally think of the atonement, and His opening the doors of everlasting life through the resurrection. But the Savior also had another very important mission. The very one about which he has just told Nicodemus.

When the people were wondering whether John the Baptist was the Christ or not,

*John answered, saying unto them all. I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall BAPTIZE you with the HOLY GHOST and with fire. (Luke 3:16)*

This part of His mission continued even after the resurrection. When He visited the Nephites He said:

*...Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the word of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you, and to be your SERVANTS; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye are baptized with water, behold, I WILL BAPTIZE YOU WITH FIRE AND WITH THE HOLY GHOST; therefore blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am. (III Nephi 12:1)*

Now pertaining to those who would be baptized by the Nephite twelve, the Lord said:

*And again, MORE BLESSED are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be VISITED with FIRE and with the HOLY GHOST and shall receive a remission of their sins. (III Nephi 12:2)*

And then the Master added,

*And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after RIGHTEOUSNESS, for THEY shall be FILLED with the HOLY GHOST. (III Nephi 12:6)*

And just prior to that the Lord had made the following statement:

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the FATHER bear record of me, for he will visit him with FIRE AND WITH THE HOLY GHOST.*

*And THUS will the Father bear record of me, and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me; for the Father and I and the Holy Ghost are one.*

*And again I say unto you, YE MUST REPENT and BECOME AS A LITTLE CHILD and be BAPTIZED in my NAME, or YE CAN IN NO WISE RECEIVE THESE THINGS.*

*(III Nephi 11:35-37)*

At this point it might be appropriate to point out that the requirements necessary to receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost are the same as those to receive the Baptism of water. However, several additional requirements are mentioned. Did you catch them? (See Chap 4)

## HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS

### BE BAPTIZED OF WATER

### BELIEVE IN CHRIST

### BECOME AS A LITTLE CHILD

Jesus taught that a person must be born again. Let us briefly analyze what happens when a person is born into mortality. As we understand it, the body and spirit constitute the soul of man. When people enter into the process of bringing children into the world they become co-creators of human life. In this process we should be reminded of the tremendous potential and possibility of becoming heavenly parents ourselves. While the new life awaits to be born it is completely encased in water. This could be symbolic of baptism where a person is completely immersed in water. When the body and spirit are united, a new soul is created on earth. A part of that new soul is a spirit recently come from the presence of God. However, sometimes it doesn't happen that way. Sometimes, for reasons which can only be given in revelation, a baby may be born without the spirit. We call this a stillborn baby. The spirit for some reason or other does not enter into the body and give it life.

Now Jesus taught that a person must be BORN AGAIN How does it happen? When a person goes down into the water to be baptized he is completely surrounded by water as he was before he was born. The next step is to receive the Holy Ghost. If we have met the requirements the Holy Ghost will come, but what if we haven't? Then we end up with only a water baptism — physically alive, but spiritually dead.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all baptisms by those who are accountable were like the one described by Mormon in III Nephi?

***And they did pray for that which they MOST DESIRED; and they desired that the HOLY GHOST should be given to them.***

*And when they had thus prayed they all went down unto the water's edge, and the multitude followed them.*

*And it came to pass that Nephi went down into the water and was baptized. And he came up out of the water and began to baptize. And he baptized those whom Jesus had chosen.*

***And it came to pass when they were all baptized and had come up out of the water, the HOLY GHOST DID FALL UPON THEM, and they were FILLED with the Holy Ghost and with FIRE. (III Nephi 19:9-13)***

Not only were they filled with the Holy Ghost, but they were encircled about with fire, angels came and ministered to them and the Lord then made another appearance.

Was Simon among the group that received the Holy Ghost? He was among the group that had been baptized. He might also have been among them that received the laying on of hands, but he was certainly not one who received the Holy Ghost. Do you think that just having received the Holy Ghost that he would do what is recorded?

*And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.*

*But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou HAST THOUGHT that the GIFT OF GOD may be purchased with money.*

*Thou hast neither PART nor LOT in this matter; for thy HEART is not right with God.*

*REPENT therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the THOUGHT of THINE HEART may be forgiven thee.*

*For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.*

*Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. (Acts 8:8-24)*

It appears that Simon was thinking how he could marry witchcraft with priestcraft to get gain, but Peter refused to join the enterprise.

To reinforce what has been said, I remember well being taught when I was just a child that at the time of my confirmation I would receive a very special gift. It was called the Holy Ghost. I was delighted and looked forward to the time of my baptism and confirmation. I was expecting something wonderful to happen. You know what? It didn't come and I came home from my baptism and confirmation at the age of eight, very disappointed. I was certain that my parents had deceived me. What good was a gift that I couldn't see, feel or touch? Well, one day the Holy Ghost did come and I did RECEIVE it, but I was thirty-four years old. Wasn't it the same with Enos, Alma and the subjects of King Benjamin? They didn't even mention their baptism by water but they surely mentioned the baptism by Fire. That was the experience that they wanted us to know about. Perhaps this is one of the Lord's alternate plans for He said:

*And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the LAYING ON OF HANDS. (D&C 68:27)*

That's what I received — the laying on of hands, but I certainly did not receive the Holy Ghost at that time. Now don't get me wrong. There are many times in my life when the Spirit has spoken to my spirit prior to the BORN AGAIN experience, but they were not the BORN AGAIN EXPERIENCE. They were only pointing me in that direction.

So important is the doctrine of Sanctification that it is called by a dozen different names and probably more. Synonyms are words that mean the same. I have taken the liberty to include phrases that also mean the same. All of these names reflect what the Lord does in repentance. You see what he does is an hundred fold more important than what we do, but we nonetheless have to do our part to set it in motion. Now what are the dozen names?

BORN AGAIN (Mosiah 27:25)

BORN OF GOD (Mosiah 27:25)

BAPTISM OF FIRE (III Nephi 12:1,2)

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST (Luke 3:16)

BORN OF THE SPIRIT (John 3:3-5)

CONVERSION (Luke 22:32) (Mosiah 2

CLEAN (D&C 110:5)

PURIFICATION (III Nephi 19:28)

RECEPTION OF THE HOLY GHOST (III Nephi 27:20)

SPIRITUAL HEALING (III Nephi 9:13) (D&C 112:13)

REGENERATION (Titus 3:5)

SANCTIFICATION (III Nephi 27:20)

Why did the Lord give the same doctrine and experience so many names? Frankly, I don't know. Perhaps He thought that we might discover just one of them and become converted.

What I now wish to point out is that a testimony is something that is inherent in the above experience, but the testimony experience is not necessarily accompanied with conversion. In other words, all people who have been converted automatically have a testimony, but not all people who have a testimony have been converted. Peter's case is the prime example.

*When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?*

*And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*

*He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?*

*And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.*

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona:*

*for flesh and blood hath not REVEALED it unto thee, but MY FATHER which is in heaven. (Matt 16:13-17)*

There is one of the strongest testimonies ever born. You can feel the ring of conviction as Peter makes the declaration. Yet a short time later, on the Night of the betrayal, the following took place:

*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift you as wheat:*

*But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when THOU ART CONVERTED, strengthen thy brethren.*

*And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death. (Luke 22:31-33)*

How bold and daring Peter felt, but the Lord brought him down to earth with —

*And He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. (Luke 22:34)*

Then followed the three most important days in the history of the world. The Son of Man was betrayed, tried, convicted and crucified, but on the third day Mary Magdalene discovered that He had risen from the dead. She went to the disciples and reported her discovery.

*Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, CAME JESUS and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

*And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

*Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

*And when he had said this, He breathed on them and saith unto them, **RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST:***

*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:19-23)*

Approximately fifty days later on the day of Pentecost —

*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

*And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

*And they were all **FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST**, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit **GAVE THEM UTTERANCE**. (Acts 2:2-4)*

Peter was converted or “changed” and so were the rest of the apostles. If you’ll finish the second chapter of Acts you’ll discover the New Peter.

Here is another incident important to this discussion. On the day that the gospel was first preached in England, the Prophet received a revelation for the President of the Twelve, Thomas B. Marsh. In it President Marsh was instructed:

*And pray for thy brethren of the Twelve. Admonish them sharply for my name’s sake, and let them be admonished for all their sins, and be ye faithful before me unto my name.*

*And after their temptations, and much tribulation, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, **they shall be CONVERTED, and I shall HEAL them**. (D&C 112:12-13)*

The year was 1837. Apparently, some of the apostles were in exactly the same condition that Peter was before his conversion. Perhaps you can begin to see the extent of the problem. If apostles have a problem becoming converted, how much more of a problem do we have?

**But don’t get discouraged. It is there for everyone that will pay the price. Don’t harden your heart or become stiffnecked, and you will make it.**

The Lord has made it very clear that the “BORN AGAIN” experience is necessary in order to enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5) There is another word that we’ve discovered means exactly the same thing – **SANCTIFICATION. The Lord has made it clear that only the sanctified will enter the Celestial Kingdom.**

***And they who are NOT SANCTIFIED through the Law which I have given unto you, even the Law of Christ, MUST inherit another kingdom, even that of a Terrestrial kingdom, or that of a Telestial kingdom. (D&C 88:21)***

And how does one attain to the state of the sanctified?

***Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be SANCTIFIED by the RECEPTION OF THE HOLY GHOST, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day. (III Nephi 27:20)***

It is commonly believed by many members of the church that if a person has been baptized and confirmed that he has also received the Holy Ghost. I've tried to show that this is not always the case. In fact, it is seldom the case. Listen to what the Lord has said to the elders of His church:

***And ye are to be taught from on high. SANCTIFY YOURSELVES and ye shall be endowed with power, that ye may give even as I have spoken. (D&C43:16)***

That statement was made to the elders of the church. Had they not already been baptized and confirmed? **If they had already been SANCTIFIED through the RECEPTION of the Holy Ghost why did the Lord command them to sanctify themselves? Would the Lord command them to sanctify themselves if they were already sanctified? Perhaps they were just like a lot of us today. Many of us have received the LAYING ON OF HANDS, but we are still waiting for the reception of the Holy Ghost.**

When a baby is born into the world it is totally dependent on its parents. As it grows and develops it becomes more and more independent until finally it reaches maturity. When the child has grown to an adult and becomes completely independent then we can rejoice. But there is another step in our growth that we should consider. When a person is "born again" he is ready to embark on a new stage of growth and development. He becomes "dependent" again, but not on his earthly parents. He now enters the realms of faith and just like a newborn babe he begins to grow spiritually. Perhaps the next step is to become again independent in the realms of the Gods. Now that we know the many different names that the Lord has used to describe the same experience perhaps we can better understand the words of Nephi.

***Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and THEN cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.***

***And THEN are ye in this straight and narrow path which LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE. (II Nephi 31:17,18)***

At this particular point one sage member of the church remarked that it looked as if "enduring to the beginning" was the real problem. After all, we have to find the straight and narrow path before we are ready to endure to the end.

< Chapter 14 (<http://mightychangeofheart.com/etmc/chapter-14/>) Chapter 16 >  
(<http://mightychangeofheart.com/etmc/chapter-16/>)

# Leave A Comment

**Name (required)**

**Email (will not be published) (required)**

**Website**

**Comment**

Submit Comment