**Living Theology Friends1337**

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 **“Birthdays”**

**Past issues of these letters (390 so far) may be read at** [**http://livingtheology.com/letters.htm**](http://livingtheology.com/letters.htm) **and I encourage you to catch up with them if you have not received earlier letters. Other writings of mine (48 articles and 30 commentaries) are at** [**http://LivingTheology.com**](http://LivingTheology.com) **and I pray they will be helpful. The author is solely responsible for the content of these letters and they do not represent any particular denomination.**

September 19 was my 75th birthday and it was also close to my 43rd birthday of being born again. I ask that you let me reflect a bit on that occasion.

More than 300 of you will receive this letter. I have not had the pleasure of meeting many of you, but we are all part of God’s Family and I send my love to each of you. It is such an awesome honor for God to have chosen us to be in His Family, and I look forward to interacting with each of you some day when we are all in the presence of our Lord. While the physical birthday is important, the spiritual birthday is even more important and we had nothing to do with either of them! I wrote recently on our adoption as His children and I had some wonderful comments from some of you about that letter as you people shared my enthusiasm for the grace of God. It is so wonderful to know that we are protected in space and time by having been adopted into His Family. Death will come to us unless the Lord returns before that event, but it has no power over us because of the victory of Jesus. Please spend some time this week praising our Lord for His sacrifices for us. He took the wrath of God that we deserve so that we will never face that wrath: “*He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him*.” (John 3:36)

I came into this world on September 19, 1938 and was spiritually born again the fall of 1970. I wasted much time between those two events and certainly have continued to disappoint the Holy Spirit after 1970. Each Christian had to have been born again; so let’s spend some time thinking about our life after that event.

* John 3:*3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
* 1Peter 1:3-4 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

I know that many Christians do not remember a specific time when they were born again. Those who do know that time have a special blessing and I am very thankful that I have that memory. It was dramatic in that I could then truly understand the Bible that I had read all my life. Although I still sinned, sin caused me great grief and I repented. I was no longer a sinner: one who practices sin. From that time on I was a child of God, a saint, one who was loved and protected by Him.

At that time each of us was indwelt by the Holy Spirit who guides us in this life and will resurrect our bodies one day:

Rom 8:9-11 *However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

The Holy Spirit is also involved in God’s discipline of His children:

* 1Cor 11:32 *But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.*
* Heb 12:5-12 *and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "my son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the lord, nor faint when you are reproved by him; for those whom the lord loves he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,*

Note in 1 Cor 11:32 above that Christians are disciplined so that we do not receive the world’s condemnation: “*Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*.” (Rom 8:1)

Each day after being born again we live as a temple of God:

* 1Cor 3:16-17 *Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and* ***that is what you are***.
* 1Cor 6:19-20 *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore* ***glorify God in your body***.
* 2Cor 6:16-18 *Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols?* ***For we are the temple of the living God****; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their god, and they shall be my people. "therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "and do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.*

Every Christian needs to think more about being a temple of God as we walk about in this world and interact with people: many of whom are not part of the Family of God. We are representatives of His and need to remember that function.

As I celebrate both my physical birth **and** my spiritual birth, I pray that you all can do the same. Praise God today for His great blessing of our spiritual birth into His Family.