

Two
Natures

by
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So many born-again Christians who have accepted Christ become discouraged and feel they never were truly saved or that they have lost their salvation. The reason for confusion has to do with a lack of understanding of the two natures of the believer. Before a believer can have peace, he must resolve this struggle. One of the fundamentals of the faith has to do with rightly dividing the Word regarding the Biblical understanding of the two natures. Let's start by asking several questions regarding the two natures. Let's examine these questions and more in light of the revealed word of God.

- ◆ Are all people born with one nature that's sinful?
- ◆ Do believers in Christ have more than one nature?
- ◆ What is meant by flesh and spirit?
- ◆ What characterizes the old nature and the new nature?
- ◆ Does the old nature war against the new nature?

When we see the two natures clearly it will give us a freedom to overcome and be victorious.

One Nature

According to the Bible, everyone born into the human race has one nature. Paul wrote the Romans and concluded his inspired letter with the following statement: “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*” (**Romans 3:23**) Prior to Paul’s conclusion on the sinfulness of man, he described man in detail.

“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.’” (**Romans 3:9-12**)

The apostle draws from the Old Testament scriptures to make his case that mankind is sinful and none seek after God. Paul clearly makes his points that all mankind is unprofitable and no one does good. And no one seeks after God. These descriptions of man can be summed up as total depravity. Would you not agree?

This Biblically-inspired description refers to the one nature of man. Man is separated from

God through the sinful nature the Bible calls “*flesh*.” All of these conclusions as related to one nature (flesh) is a result of one man’s sin. “*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.*” (**Romans 5:19**) Death entered into the world by sin and death reigned. “*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned*” (**Romans 5:12**) Adam sinned in the garden and sin has been transmitted down through all ever born to the human race.

As we examine the Word, we see there is no good in flesh or the nature of natural man. It is corrupt. “*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*” (**Romans 7:18**) Notice, there is no good in the flesh. So, what is the remedy or solution to this situation?

Two Natures

“*Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*” (**I Peter 1:23**) Man needs to be born again. He needs a new nature that cannot sin. He needs a Savior to save him from his sin that separates him from Christ.

Man needs to be redeemed and justified to have a relationship with God. Man needs a new nature.

Jesus challenged a teacher of Israel to be born again. “*Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’*” (**John 3:3, 7**) To be “*born again*” is to receive a new divine nature referred to as the Spirit.

Nicodemus had first been born by parents “*Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’*” (**John 3:7**) Notice, first he was born through a woman. And he asks how to be born a second time. However, he was thinking on an earthly level and not divinely or heavenly. All humans have a soul, body and spirit at birth but just as Nicodemus had to have a spiritual birth to receive a new nature, so do all nonbelievers. Nicodemus needed to think in terms of a divine nature as Peter described “*by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*” (**II Peter 1:4**)

People have a difficult time thinking spiritually. We want to focus on the natural realm! We need to look up and be born from above. The new nature is received when we receive Christ. “*I have been crucified with*

Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20) When we receive Jesus, we are born again and have two natures. Acceptance of Jesus as our Lord removes spiritual blindness for the sinner. We were all unrenewed before receiving our spiritual birth from above.

Paul says to *“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16)* He never says the old nature is done away with or removed. He does say to be led of the Spirit. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Romans 8:14)* To be led or controlled by the Spirit and to be *“spiritually minded” (Romans 8:6)* is being led of the Spirit.

“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law” (Galatians 5:18) The Apostle was dealing with the Galatians regarding the law and being under bondage to the law. And he was dealing with the works of the flesh. *“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom*

of God.” (*Galatians 5:19-21*) He knew that the believer would face many battles. Paul knew the regenerate believer had two natures. Paul knew the believer had one nature that was totally corrupt and hopelessly depraved. And he knew the regenerate believer had a new nature that was totally and absolutely good. And Paul knew these two natures were contrary to each other.

The War Within

Once a sinner is translated from the kingdom of darkness and death into the kingdom of His dear Son, the battle begins. (*Colossians 1:13*) Notice the strife that Paul talked about in *Romans 7*. “*For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.*” (*Romans 7:15-16*) Even though the sinner becomes a true, born-again believer, there is warfare. We do things we hate to do. We do things we despise.

Many do not understand the doctrine of the two natures and sin in their lives. Many believers question their conversion. When they see this contradiction of feelings in themselves, many Christians conclude they were not truly saved, or many conclude that they have lost their salvation and need to be saved again. That is why

understanding the Biblical truths concerning the two natures of the believer is so important for growth. It is critical for peace of mind. Understanding the two natures helps us to see total security in Christ. *“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” (Galatians 5:17)* Here Paul describes the battle of the two natures. We see clearly the flesh and the Spirit.

“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?” (James 4:1) James agrees. Some Christians falsely think that the old nature or sinful nature has been eradicated, or demolished and destroyed. Or incorrectly Christians are taught that the sinful nature somehow decreases while the new nature increases. The Bible does not teach these concepts.

Conclusion

There is no way to fully mature in the things of God without understanding the two natures of the believer.

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.” (II Peter 3:18)

Peter emphasizes grace and knowledge. We must grasp that the believer's two natures exist and that they war against each other. We need to understand when we fail and come up short that we have not lost our salvation nor do we need to believe that we were never saved to begin with. By rightly dividing the Word and recognizing the two natures, we "*can go on to perfection.*" We judge the sin in our lives and confess our sin. "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*" (**I John 1:8**)

The Word says we need to judge sin. However, one cannot properly do so without seeing the truths regarding the new and old natures of the believer. Jesus said that we are not to judge according to appearance but to judge righteously.

The non-believer, and many times the Christian, looks on an unregenerate man and mistakenly thinks he is saved because of his good works. God never says that the non-believer is redeemed because of his education, knowledge, cultured mindset or charitable acts of philanthropy. Only faith and acceptance of Jesus Christ changes an unregenerate sinner. "*So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.'*" (**Acts 16:31**) Here is how we are saved without qualifications.

The believer in Jesus still has his old nature and may be unrefined, uneducated but is a new creation and receives a new nature. “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” (**John 1:12-13**) May we agree with God’s Word and not listen to natural man.

“*But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*” (**I Corinthians 2:14**) These things are spiritually understood. The same is true with the two natures of the believer.

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- ◆ There are other tracts that enhance and highlight the subject of the two natures of the believer. Read *The Way Of Victory Over The Practice Of Sin* by Douglas L. Crook and *Blessed Assurance* by F.E. Goodrick. These can be found at:
 - ◆ <http://agfwheatridgeco.com/tracts.aspx>.

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