

# When Our Change Comes

(Transcript)

By Warren Zehrung – 6/21/2014

Paul shares with us an inspired observation when he writes that we can know about God by looking at the creation itself. God even gives us a picture of our conversion and transformation that must take place before we are able to become eternal children of God in the Family of God.

## Romans 1:

**20** The invisible things of [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, **being understood** by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Divine Nature; so that they are without excuse.”

That tells us that we are able to see the wonderful workings of God in the creation He has given us. A good illustration of this principle is the beautiful example of conversion and transformation seen in the life of a butterfly. As a caterpillar worm it is confined to a shrub, but as a butterfly its existence is enhanced so that it might span the earth. The metamorphosis process that a caterpillar worm goes through is not unlike man’s conversion and transformation to become glorious children of God. We begin like that caterpillar worm.

## Isaiah 41:

**14** Fear not, thou **worm** Jacob, and ye men of Israel.

This process of going through a metamorphosis and emerging as a stunning butterfly is much like the example that Jesus gave to Nicodemus in John 3. Men must undergo a spiritual **transformation** [*Metamorphoo*’ in the Greek] or **change** to emerge as perfected spiritual members of the Divine God Family. Jesus begins to explain this **process** or **progression** to Nicodemus:

## John 3:

**3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus, as you are in the flesh right now you cannot see the Kingdom of God because you must first go through a **change**, a **conversion process** or a transformation progression to a more advanced state. Jesus is speaking of **being born** into the spiritual Kingdom of God – but natural birth is the only concept with which Nicodemus is familiar.

## John 3:

**4** 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’ answer it that conversion is a process – first the motherly birth (as Nicodemus referenced), and finally Spirit-birth into the Kingdom of God.

## John 3:

**5** Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water **and** of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

**6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Today we will be speaking of **When Our Change Comes**. Whether we refer to it as our **Change...** or our **Conversion...** or our **Transformation...** we will be speaking of the process or progression we must go through to become eternal Children of God. This conversion and transformation process is an extremely rare condition upon the earth at this time.

Our heavenly Father initiates our calling and developmental process. In one sense we are **converted at once** when repentance and faith have brought us to baptism and the receiving of God's Holy Spirit. But after that, the seventh doctrine of Jesus Christ, *go on to perfection*, reveals that our conversion is a **life-long process** and transformation.

#### Hebrews 6:

- 1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, **let us go on unto perfection**; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,
- 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

#### Ephesians 4:

- 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **unto a perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

Paul paraphrases the words of Jesus when he explains:

#### 1 Corinthians 15:

- 50 Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood** cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

In God's Church we've become accustomed to using the word **Conversion**. We usually say of someone who has not been baptized, "He is unconverted. ...And of someone that is baptized, "He is converted." ...Though we are well aware that not all who have been baptized are truly converted.

According to Biblical usage, the term 'converted' refers to one who has **been turned to God's way**. 'Converted' is translated from the Greek *epistrepho*, which means "to turn about" or "turn towards" (Vine's, "Convert, Conversion"). '*Epi*' means about, towards – it can also mean **higher or upwards**. Thirty-eight times in the New Testament '*epistrepho*' is used as revert, convert, turn about again, spun around, etc.

'Conversion' indicates that, in addition to recognizing and acknowledging sin, one is taking the necessary action to **turn away** from sin by turning toward God. This requires doing what is right, not just acknowledging what is wrong. Jesus spun around on His heel and asked, "Who touched Me?" [*epistrepho*] He **turned** Himself... [*epistrepho*] simply means "turn around."

#### Matthew 9:

- 22 But Jesus **turned him about** [*epistrepho*], and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

This turning around is the basic meaning of '*epistrepho*' – but we will go on to see the further development of '*epistrepho*' to mean – turning to the way of God. That 'turning about' the straight forward meaning of [*epistrepho*] – but it takes on a greater meaning as we go through the Scriptures.

**Acts 15:**

- 3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the **conversion** of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

**Acts 26:**

- 18 To open their eyes, and to **turn them** [*epistrepho*] from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

**Acts 28:**

- 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be **converted** [*epistrepho*], and I should heal them.

**James 5:**

- 19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert [*epistrepho*] him;  
20 Let him know, that he which converts [*epistrepho*] the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

'Repent' conveys the concept that one must recognize and admit his sins and acknowledge the need to change his mind, heart and behavior. But there is much more to the process than an attitude change toward God in order to arrive finally in the Divine Family of God. The apostle Paul describes the process of conversion: Paul begins with those who are still in the **world** – as far as their thoughts and actions are concerned.

**Romans 8:**

- 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.  
6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be **spiritually minded** is life and peace.

Brethren, are you **spiritually minded**?

**Romans 8:**

- 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.  
8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Next Paul addresses the Church brethren, the saints, the Children of God when he says:

**Romans 8:**

- 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.  
10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.  
11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.

Conversion is more of a Spiritual **Transformation** than merely a **change** in directions. Keep in mind that Paul is speaking to the converted brethren of the Church at Corinth. They are already baptized and converted as we use the word – and yet there is a much greater **change, conversion or transformation** that must take place before being born as spirit beings into the Kingdom.

### 1 Corinthians 15:

- 51** Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be **changed**,  
**52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be **changed**.

Keep in mind that many of these Corinthians to whom Paul is speaking fell away from the Truth – and did not complete their conversion process.

### 2 Timothy 1:

- 15** ...All they which are in Asia be turned away from me;

Two different kinds of bodies are being discussed – the **physical** one that for most people will be buried in a grave and a **Spiritual** being that will inherit the eternal Kingdom of God.

### 1 Corinthians 15:

- 44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Paul is clearly saying that we will not be in these bodies in the Kingdom.

### Philippians 3:

- 21** Who shall **change** our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body...

God is a **Glorious** Spirit Being. We have seen too many of our brethren make the false assumption that their conversion process was **entirely** complete on the day they were baptized. They think, "I'm baptized – I'm home free!" Some erroneously think of conversion in that way.

We like to refer to ourselves as being "converted." But in reality, at our baptism we have only just begun the **long process** of conversion. Conversion will not be complete until we have fully taken on the mind of Christ. It is a process that must continue throughout our lifetime.

God, in His love, is creating us in His image. We are not yet completely like God. We have a long way to go. God's goal and purpose in creating mankind is to reproduce Himself. This cannot be achieved until we develop His holy righteous character. God cannot instantaneously create His holy and righteous character in us by proclamation or declaration. Godly character must be developed in us through a **process**.

God requires us to be willing participants in the character development process. Our conversion is not a simple matter of accepting the fact that Christ died for our sins, and that, if we hold onto our beliefs throughout our life, we will become God-plane beings in the Kingdom of God.

It is not enough to stop eating pork – which is not good for our bodies. It is not enough to stop smoking – which brings illness and death. It is not sufficient to keep the Holy Days and the Sabbath, or to fast occasionally and to pray often. Certainly, these are all good and necessary, but they are not the entire picture. The process of our fundamental change and transformation must be complete. Our destiny is to become divine Spirit beings in the Kingdom of God.

Let's understand that our baptism is the very beginning of an all-encompassing transformation that lasts all of our days. Who and what we were when called by God will be completely made over.

### **Romans 12:**

- 2** Be not conformed to this world: but be ye **transformed** [*Metamorphoo*] by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

When one of our grand-sons was a young man he had some toys called **transformers**. One example was a truck that when all the pieces were rotated around – it **morphed** into a flying space man. It was entirely **transformed** into something entirely different.

'Transformation' is a good Bible word. It implies **major** or total change.

The definition of Transformation – '*Metamorphoo*' is:

- ...a thorough or dramatic **change** in form or appearance
- ...to change into another form, to **transform**, to transfigure
- ...metamorphosis during the life cycle
- ...a complete or major change
- and
- ...in Church usage **transformation** will refer to a spiritual awakening.

### **2 Corinthians 3:**

- 18** We all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are **changed** [*Metamorphoo*] into the **same** image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

God is a **Glorious** Spirit Being.

That proves that we are to be **transformed** into the image of God – glory to glory.

After while we will look at Genesis where it says that we are created in the image of God – but we will not find there—the **same** image from glory to glory – because we are not yet **Glorious** Spirit Beings as God is.

The conversion of Job is a most interesting subject in the Bible. The Book of Job is very old – probably within only a few centuries after the flood – which is mentioned in the book. We know that there was a **righteous line** of Godly men from Noah all the way down to Abraham.

Before the flood, men lived to be almost 1000 years old. But after the flood, longevity gradually decreased to a few hundred years – to 120 years and then finally to 70 years. Job lived long before the time of Moses evidenced by the fact that the longevity of his life is more comparable to the long lives of the patriarchs who lived around 2200 B.C. The Book of Job reveals that Job lived what we would consider to be at least two entire life-spans.

### **Job 1:**

- 3** His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the **greatest** of all the men of the east.

After being tested by God with boils—losing all of his children in a tornado, and all of his material wealth, God blessed Job with 10 more children and twice as much wealth (Job 1:19).

**Job 42:**

- 12 So the LORD blessed the **latter** end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.
- 13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.
- 16 **After** this lived Job [another] hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.
- 17 So Job died, being **old** and full of days.

The Septuagint states that Job died at the age of 240 much like Abraham's great-grandparents (Genesis 11).

The patriarch Job knew a great deal about the Plan of God. He knew that it was given unto man – *once to die and then the resurrection*. Job understood much about the wrath of God and the Day of the Lord.

**Job 14:**

- 12 So man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens are no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.
- 13 O that thou would hide me in the grave, that thou would keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou would appoint me a set time, and remember me!

**Hebrews 9:**

- 27 As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

The **title** of the sermon comes from this next verse:

**Job 14:**

- 14 If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, **till my change comes**.
- 15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

Yes, God's plan will come to completion and fruition. We are told in the Scriptures that Jesus looked just like any other man – there was nothing outstanding that would set Him apart. That is the way the apostles saw Him and knew Him.

**Matthew 17:**

- 1 And after six days Jesus takes Peter, James, and **John** his brother, and brought them up into an high mountain apart,
- 2 And was **transfigured** [*metamorphoo*] before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Jesus gave the three men a vision of what He would look like after His **transformation** and resurrection – after He would be **born again** as He said to Nicodemus.

It is interesting that it was again the apostle **John** who was privileged to see Jesus this way again after He was **transformed**! Here is how John describes Jesus – after His transformation – the second time He saw Jesus in His transformed state:

**Revelation 1:**

- 13** And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.
- 14** His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;
- 15** And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

Our calling and initial conversion only put us on the path that will eventually bring us to the Kingdom of God and the Family of God. We are not nearly there yet. Our sojourn has only just begun. God is not like we are now—and we are not yet like God.

**1 John 3:**

- 2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we **shall** be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

That will be in His resurrected **transformed** state. We are created to become like God. We have a long way to go. Yes, God did say:

**Genesis 1:**

- 26** Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...

God expresses His plan and intention to eventually bring many sons and daughters to glory (Hebrews 2:10). That is His Plan and purpose when He began creating man out of the dirt of the earth.

**Genesis 2:**

- 7** And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

**Genesis 1:**

- 27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

That sounds like we are already like God – doesn't it? But it does infer that we have responsibilities. But, God is Spirit and we are carnal flesh, sold under sin (Romans 7:14).

God lives eternally – and yet we die. We are not now like Jesus is in His resurrected form: God is perfect compassion, mercy and love – and we are not there yet. Jesus Christ has laid His life down for us – and we must learn to likewise lay our lives down for the brethren. We should ask ourselves which characteristics of God are we able to put on. That is becoming in the image of God.

Being made in the image of God points out two things: First our incredible potential, and secondly how far short we are of being exactly like God is. Overcoming is the key if we are to be more spiritual as God is. Therefore, growing in grace and knowledge is necessary to our spiritual stability so that we do not revert to the way of this world.

**2 Peter 3:**

- 17** Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, **fall** from your own steadfastness.
- 18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

God's Spirit transforms a person's life. It enables us to override the pulls of human nature and live as God commands. God's Spirit is the single most important component in a **Christian's life**.

God's Spirit, however, dramatically changes their attitude, and their outlook. They earnestly desire to obey God, and He gives them a humble, obedient attitude and approach toward Him and His Word. They can willingly and faithfully obey His commandments. They have received from Him the power of the Holy Spirit to combat Satan and their own nature. In short, they are the transformed, special people of God.

Our **transformation** is a matter of going from a lack of character to attaining perfect, holy and righteous character by the power of God's Holy Spirit working in us to bring us to Glory.

End **When Our Change Comes**