

The Harvester



Preparing Souls

To Serve The Lord



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“Being Born Again”

By Brian R. Kenyon

Jesus first mentioned being born again in John 3:3, when He told Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Then, after Nicodemus asked, “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 clarified, “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” (Jn. 3:4-5). This being “born of water and of the Spirit” is clearly a reference to the baptism Jesus commissioned prior to ascending to the Father’s right hand (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk.16:16 cf. 1 Cor. 12:13). According to First Peter 1:18-23, this being “born again” involves three important aspects that should make each of us again realize and better appreciate what God has done for us and what our response should be!

Our Redemption

Being born again first and foremost involves our redemption. Peter wrote,

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Pet. 1:18-19)

The word “redeemed” (from *lutroo*, λυτρόω) means to be set free from bondage by some sort of payment; ransomed. The Greek word is found in only two other verses (Lk. 24:21; Tit. 2:14). From what were Peter’s first readers redeemed? “Vain [worthless] conversation [manner of

life]”! This can refer to any life lived apart from God, but is especially suggestive of the life of idolatry, which is often described as futile (cf. 1 Kgs. 17:15; 1 Cor. 8:4; Jer. 2:5, 8; Acts 14:15; Eph. 4:17). This “worthless manner of life” was “handed down from their ancestors,” the meaning of the word translated “tradition from your fathers (from *patroparadotos*, πατροπαράδοτος). Note what did and did not redeem us. We were not redeemed with gold and silver, perishable things, but with the precious blood of Christ! His blood is precious because it: (1) cleanses our conscience (Heb. 9:14); (2) gives us access to God (Heb. 10:19); (3) continuously cleanses us from all sin (1 Jn. 1:7; Rev. 1:5); (4) gives us victory over Satan (Rev. 12:11); and (5) rescues us from a sinful way of life (1 Pet. 1:19). Jesus freely gave Himself as a spotless “lamb of God” (Jn. 1:29). Let us be thankful to God that being born again redeems from a life of futility and eternal ruin!

Appreciation Dinner to Be Held Tuesday, January 17, 2012

The school will host its first annual appreciation dinner on the Tuesday night of our next lectureship. The school’s board of directors decided that this would be a more expedient way to show our appreciation to our boosters as well as to let others know about the work of the Lord through the school. Please call or email the office today to RSVP! We will have genuine, Florida style Bar-B-Que, cooked by some of our very own! We are asking that participants make a donation of \$10.

Our Redeemer

Being born again also involves our Redeemer. Peter continued,

Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, ²¹Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. (1 Pet. 1:20-21)

Knowing that God's love planned from eternity our redeemer, Jesus Christ, is indeed an awesome thought! "Foreordained" (from *proginosko*, προγινώσκω) simply means to know something before it happens (Acts 26:5; Rom. 8:29; 11:12; 2 Pet. 3:17). This tells us that Christ's work was no afterthought! "Before the foundation of the world" is when God knew His plan of salvation involving Christ (Jn. 17:24; Eph. 1:4 cf. "from/since the foundation of the world," Mt. 25:34; Lk. 11:50; Heb. 4:3; 9:26; Rev. 13:8; 17:8). Christ made known God's eternal plan by His incarnation (1 Pet. 1:20b), as the word "manifest" indicates (cf. 1 Jn. 1:2). Jesus was (and is) God. The apostle John confirmed, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*" (Jn. 1:1). The "last times" indicates the Christian age, the final period in human history this side of eternity (Acts 2:16 cf. Heb. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:18; 1 Cor. 10:11). Our Redeemer gives us trust and hope in God (1 Pet. 1:21). Being born again would be impossible without there being a Redeemer! Thanks be to God!

Our Rebirth

Being born again also involves our rebirth with a purpose. Peter concludes,

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: ²³Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Pet. 1:22-23)

Being born again is how our souls are made clean. "Purified" (from *hagnizo*, ἀγνίζω) is used here to denote spiritual cleansing (cf. Jas. 4:8; 1 Jn. 3:3). That cleansing associated with being born again is made possible only "in obeying the truth"! As James wrote, it was through God's "own will begat he us with the word of truth (Jas. 1:18). Peter earlier said we are to obey Jesus (1 Pet. 1:2), and we are to obey the word (cf. 1 Pet. 2:8); thus, obeying the truth is obeying Jesus, which is obeying the word! Being sanctified by the Spirit and obeying the truth go hand in hand (2 Thes. 2:10, 12-13 cf. Jn. 15:3; 1 Cor. 4:15). Note that truth is the basis for purification of the heart and purification is the result of obedience to the truth.

Being born again involves responsibility. Purity of the soul leads to love of the brethren. (*continued on page 4*)

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“Do You Understand the Local Church?”

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Joseph DeBose



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MONDAY

9:00 The Local Church in Reality Teral Walker
 9:40 The Local Church in God’s Purpose Jackie M. Stearsman
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Christ’s Authority Over Local Churches (Rev. 1) Sam Hester
 11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Functional Issues And The Local Church

1:30 What Is Local Church Autonomy? Bruce Daugherty
 2:00 Abuses of Local Church Autonomy David Stearsman
 2:30 Church Cooperation and Autonomy Sam Hester
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Insights from the Church at Jerusalem Keith Cozort
 7:45 Revealing God’s Manifold Wisdom Eric Dawkins, Sr.

TUESDAY

9:00 The Godhead’s Role in Local Churches Steve Atnip
 9:40 Apostles and Prophets in First Century Local Churches Earl D. Edwards

10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Christ’s Complete Knowledge of Local Churches (Rev 2-3) Brooks Boyd
 11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Weaker Or Stronger Local Church?

1:30 Elderships and Shepherding the Flock Johnie Scaggs
 2:00 Scriptural or Unscriptural Practices? Bruce Daugherty
 2:30 Stable or Unstable Members? Eric Dawkins, Sr.
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Insights from the Church at Antioch British Carlton
 7:45 The Local Church in Three Figures Jimmy Clark



Chad Tagtow



Logan Summers



Jackie Stearsman

WEDNESDAY

9:00 Each Member’s Role in a Local Church Joseph DeBose
 9:40 Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers in the Local Church Earl D. Edwards
 Today
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Christ’s Demands for Local Churches to Repent (Rev. 2-3) Jimmy Clark
 11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Preaching And The Local Church

1:30 From Where Do Preachers Come? Rick Kenyon
 2:00 Taking Heed to Self and Doctrine Mike Elledge
 2:30 Preaching What Is Profitable Freddie Clayton
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Insights from the Church at Corinth Benjamin L. Radford, Sr.
 7:45 Importance of Local Church Membership Billy Lambert

THURSDAY

9:00 Deacons Serving Well Chad Tagtow
 9:40 Women in Local Church Development Billy Lambert

10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Christ’s Promises to Local Churches Who Overcome (Rev. 2-3) Melvin Otey
 11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Local Churches And Evangelism

1:30 Evangelistic Insights from Paul Jackie M. Stearsman
 2:00 Personal Work in the 21st Century Steve Vice
 2:30 Taking the Gospel to the Masses William Howard
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Insights from the Churches of Galatia Logan Summers
 7:45 A Local Church with Proper Direction Melvin Otey



Earl Edwards



Mike Elledge



Sam Hester



William Howard



David Stearsman



Johnie Scaggs



Ben Radford, Sr.

concerning the local church is beneficial in any climate. Study and learn about these important topics among others who love God, His word, and the fellowship we have with one another. Understanding the local church will help us better glorify God!



Melvin Otey



Billy Lambert



Rick Kenyon

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The word “unfeigned [sincere, NKJ]” (from *anupokriton*, ἀνυπόκριτον) means free from hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9; 2 Cor. 6:6; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:5). “Love of the brethren” (from φιλadelphia) refers to brotherly love (Rom. 12:10; 1 Thes. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 2 Pet. 1:7). Our pure souls demand that we love one another! The love here commanded is *agape* love. This “love” is a,

[S]trong word which indicates an intelligent love based on understanding and purpose. It is the love which recognizes the worth of its object, has a concern for that object, and seeks its best interest. (Kelcy 39)

The way we are to love the brethren is further characterized as “fervently,” which means earnestly, constantly, whole heartedly. It is not a “cold formality” (cf. 1 Pet. 4:8), but from the heart. *Agape* love is to have its source from the inner person, and is not to be pretended, nor a matter of mere words (cf. 1 Jn. 3:18)!

Being born again is only attainable by the word of God. We are born again, and thus made pure, by the “incorruptible seed.” We know that “The seed is the word of

God” (Lk. 8:11). God’s word definitely finds itself in the category of the incorruptible (cf. 1 Pet. 1:18). In contrast to “all the glory of man,” which fades away like grass (1 Pet. 1:24), the word of God “liveth and abideth for ever” (cf. Heb. 4:12)!

Conclusion

Sometimes we take God’s plan of salvation for granted, not always recognizing and appreciating God’s great love and foreknowledge in bringing about the new birth. God’s plan involves our redemption, our Redeemer, and our rebirth, which implies responsibility. Let us better appreciate what God has done and live our lives accordingly, realizing that “the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn. 2:17)! 🙏

Works Cited

Kelcy, Raymond C. *The Letters of Peter and Jude*. The Living Word Commentary. Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1984.

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