

My Thoughts for Sunday, 19 October 2014

"You Must Be Born Again"

I have heard this phrase so many times by so many different individuals; pastors & priests, TV Evangelists & motivational speakers, etc., each with their own specific explanation. Where does one turn to except God's Holy Bible for the true answers?

The Bible reveals that being "*born again*" or "*born of water and the Spirit*" (John 3:3,5) refers to baptism. 1 Peter 1:23 states; "*You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.*"

The question often arises; "What is responsible for the new birth: the waters of baptism or the Word of God?"

That's like asking which of your parents is responsible for your natural birth. You would not be here if it were not for both. Why must we try to separate the two necessary components of the rebirth by water and the Word? As Paul admonished in his letter to the people of Ephesus at [Ephesians 5:25-26 \(NIV2011\)](#)

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*

²⁶ *to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,*

This washing by water through the Word is admonished in Acts chapter 22, verse 16: "*And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.*"

Read this carefully: "*wash your sins away, calling on His name.*" **Both water and the Word are required in rebirth.**

Last week we saw at Ephesians 2:8 that we were saved purely by the Grace of God. This was a totally free gift that we could never earn and did not deserve. If we look further in verse 14, we read how Jew and Gentile were reconciled through Christ;

¹⁴ *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, [Ephesians 2:14 \(NIV2011\)](#)*

The blessings just go on and on. First we are born again by the water and the Word, then reconciled to God through Christ as explained in [Ephesians 2:15-16 \(NIV2011\)](#)

¹⁵ *by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,*

¹⁶ *and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.*

Lets dwell for a moment on this most important statement given us in verse 16. Here Paul made mention of our reconciliation to God through the "*cross, by which Jesus put to death their hostility*" We as Christians know that on that cross is where Jesus gave up His very perfect, human life for our sins, that we might also be redeemed from our sinful state. He paid the price He did not owe because we owed a price we could not pay.

For all believing Christians, He has now created a new humanity; combining Jew and Gentile to Himself that through the undeserved love and grace of God and through the washing of rebirth in baptism we now "*have access to the Father by one Spirit.*"

¹⁹ *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,*

²⁰ *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone."*

[Ephesians 2:18-20](#) (NIV2011)

Let's not end this thought here but look to the two closing verses of Ephesians. Here is the culmination of these many promises, these free gifts from our ever loving Father. Paul goes on to conclude that these two groups, this whole building is being joined together as one Holy temple to the Lord. He states that you too as a forgiven, reborn, reconciled child of God are becoming a virtual dwelling place in which God lives, by His Spirit. **Ephesians 2:20-22 (NIV2011)**

²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

What more could a person wish for? How could anyone want to turn down any of these wonderful, free, undeserved gifts from a Holy and Righteous God? We have been born again, joined - Jew and Gentile- into one family, redeemed, reconciled through Christ and made into a Holy temple for our loving God to in-dwell.