

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



THE LENEXA EDIFIER



John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

JUNE 4, 2017

HAVE YOU BEEN BORN AGAIN?

by Jim Stauffer

We hear a lot about "born again Christians" in our world today. Yet many who claim to be born again have not given close attention to and obeyed what our Lord said about the subject. Let us take a look at the text of **John 3:1-7**. In this passage Jesus teaches a man named Nicodemus some very specific things about being born again. Things that are substantiated by the apostolic writers. Let us note a few.

The first thing we must notice from this text is he must believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus claimed this and would be an imposter if it is untrue. Nicodemus listened because he acknowledged Jesus as being from God, **John 3:2** *Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.* Second we must learn one has to be born again to enter the kingdom of God. Third, Jesus dispels the idea a man can be born again physically by saying, **John 3:5** *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* He leaves Nicodemus with the realization there is a new birth of water and the Spirit that is necessary for a man to enter the kingdom of God.

What is this new birth? What does it mean for man to be born of water and the Spirit? A birth indicates a heritage. It indicates a parentage. Now Paul tells the Galatians, *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.* (**Gal. 3:26,27**) This new birth then makes us sons of God. John offers a similar description, *See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are.....*(**1 John 3:1**) Paul explains this to Titus with the following words, **Titus 3:4** *But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy*

Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This comes after he has told him *the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men* (**Titus 2:11**). Concerning this subject of the grace of God, Paul teaches the Ephesians man is saved by the grace of God through faith (**Eph. 2:8,9**). Combine this with Paul's communication to the Corinthians about the condition one must attain to receive the eternal inheritance, *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.* (**2 Cor. 5:17**) All of this comports with Jesus' teaching, **John 8:24** *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."*

If we make the mistake of taking this teaching piecemeal we fail to see what is necessary to enter the kingdom, the message Nicodemus needed and was given by Christ. A man must be forgiven of sins that have separated him from God (**Isa. 59:1,2**) or he will die in his sins as Jesus says. When a man is forgiven of sins, he is reconciled to God as Paul told the Corinthians and he becomes a new creature. Paul makes it clear to Titus that the grace of God has been extended in the person of Jesus Christ who gave His life on Calvary for the sins of all men for the very purpose of enabling mankind to be restored to God through this forgiveness. It then falls on the shoulders of each man to have the faith Paul describes to the Galatians to become a son of God by putting on Christ in baptism. This baptism Paul tells Titus is, *the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.* It is through this new birth that one accomplishes all the requirements of God and Christ to enter the kingdom that gives the hope of eternity when this life is over (**see 2 Cor. 5:1-9**). This is truly the way a man is saved by grace through faith as Paul tells the Ephesians.

Now, have you been born again?

THE NARROW GATE; THE BROAD WAY

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Christians, people who are (or, should be) filled with joy, are eager to accept the authority of Jesus. Doing so means that we are not in charge; we do not seek to govern our lives; we believe that Christ alone knows what is best for us. The call to kingdom living is a call to understand and imbibe even those most difficult of realizations about life, obedience, judgment, and eternity. His call is radical; it gets to the root of who we are before God; it is an either or proposition. We will walk the road that leads to life; or, we will not do so. We either respect the authority of Jesus, or we don't. To help us, Jesus says there are but two choices: the narrow gate and the broad way

The companionship of friends and family is cherished by many. If you choose to walk on the broad way that leads to destruction, you will not be alone—ever! You will have lots of company. This well traveled road promises fun, amusements, and satisfactions. Remember, though, that majority opinions don't count. Finally, destruction will come. If you take the narrow, restricted way that leads to life, you will find fewer fellow travelers. In fact, you might sometimes be all alone. Likely, though, there will be a few who will walk beside you (**Mark 10:29**); that company of brothers and sisters and fathers and mothers will help you.

What might prepare one to walk the way that leads to life? Do we remember the beatitudes? The poor in spirit, those who mourn over their undone condition, the meek, those who are hungry for the kingdom—aren't these travelers who understand that even though the way to life is narrow, that way can still be walked successfully? The blessedness of Jesus provides a corrective to attitudes of heart that sometimes stifle successful kingdom living.

Walking the way of the kingdom is an everyday exercise—an everyday exercise of choices. Are we on the right road or not? Have we left our baggage behind? Do our lives reflect humility or pride? Do we seek the narrow way or comfortable middle ground? Do we think we are good enough or perhaps not too bad after all? Do we admire Jesus' teaching? Or, are we challenged to walk more narrowly in the way of the King?

A danger in warning after warning, demand after demand, trial after trial, is that we might forget that there can be and will be true joy when we decide to walk with Jesus. With that joy comes true freedom—freedom from self and from sin. The joy of friendship with God and His Son thrives deep within the heart of the truly committed kingdom citizen. Life has new meaning. Here are the words of Geo. W. Robinson (d. 1877). *"Heaven above is*

softer blue, Earth around is softer green; Something lives in every hue, Christ-less eyes have never seen; Birds with gladder songs o'er flow, Flowers with deeper beauties shine, since I know, as now I know, I am His, and He is mine." You are walking somewhere. But where?

Randy Harshbarger

Old Testament Answers: Why Am I Here?

One of the most oft asked question addressed by Philosophers has to do with the meaning of life. In other words: Why am I here? The "not so new" philosophy of evolution (Yes, it's a philosophy and NOT science!) answers with a resounding: You have no meaning! You have no worth and when you are gone from this world there will nothing remain of you and even the memories will soon disappear. Search the writings of Richard Dawkins and others who argue for atheism and this is what you find. "Disheartening, ain't it?" Pardon my grammar, but I got your attention.

Contrast this with the view of the Old Testament and we come to a very different end. The Preacher wrote in **Ecclesiastes 12:13f**, *"This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."* To many this would seem to be just as disheartening. "I have two alternatives: meaninglessness or slavery. Great choices, those!" But remember to look at the end of the matter as the writer of Ecclesiastes told us to do.

At the end of life what does meaninglessness offer? Nothing! No hope! No joy! No satisfaction! No future! But what about keeping God's commandments? Consider Abraham, the Friend of God. At the close of his life we read in the New American Standard Bible, *"And Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people."* (**Genesis 25:8**) Countless believers can echo these sentiments for their own lives and for their Mothers and Fathers as well. Obedience to God brings deep satisfaction!

Cleveland Reddinger

"There Must Be Heresies"

It is so discouraging. When it happens the hurt and disappointment can be devastating. The work and progress of the church can be set back for years. Friends and brethren are often alienated irreparably. Why must it be so? Why does it seem like church trouble is so common? How is it that these divisions are reported again and again? Is it inevitable? Are we destined to simply split, and split, and split again?

The Corinthian church had suffered through a good bit of trouble. In fact, Paul's first letter to them dealt

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primarily with internal problems in that congregation. If you had been a member there, surely you would have been discouraged by the divisiveness that characterized their history. Paul addressed these issues. He indicated that their problems were widely reported and he urged them that *"that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1:10,11)*. He blamed the situation on their *"carnal"* outlook and rebuked them for their failure to grow spiritually (3:1-4).

While rebuking the Corinthians and stressing their need to grow past these issues which indicated their spiritual immaturity, Paul also revealed that such problems served a necessary role. Note: *". . . I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (11:18,19)*. Do you see it? The divisiveness, the arguing, the forming of sects and parties within the church, the disputes, etc., all served to demonstrate which ones were "approved" among the Corinthians. In other words, those who were faithfully committed to God, who were determined to live by His truth, who would not compromise with error - these would rise to the occasion. They would "be made manifest," that is, their faith and loyalty would become obvious to all that objectively considered the situation.

So, what about our "issues" today? Must we be content with the problems? Should we not worry about the divisions and the "church splits?" Of course, we must be concerned - such cannot be commended (11:22). Unfortunately, these things have always happened and will continue to happen as weak, carnal Christians do what they have always done. But, when these terrible problems arise, let us be committed to do the right thing. In the end, error will be exposed and those who do right will stand *"approved"* before God.

by Greg Gwin

Be Not As The Horse **Burl Grubb**

Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding (Psalm 32:9). Israel was often branded *stiffnecked*, like a restless horse or mule. These animals obey by constraint. James says, *We put bits in the horses mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole bodies*. But man is not to be like them. He must render a willing service to his Master. The horse and mule have no understanding, therefore are excusable. Man is a rational being and is inexcusable if he acts like them. Since he is made to be guided by reason, he must render to God a reasonable service.
~via e Instructor; Albertville, Alabama; Taken from Market Street Messenger

My Mother's Hymn

I sit alone at twilight
And watch the shadows dim
And to me there comes stealing
The thought of mother's hymn;

Just as I heard it in childhood,
Her words float back to me;
I seem to hear her singing,
"Nearer, My God, to Thee."

I've strayed so far in paths of sin,
Been reckless, weak and wild,
Forgotten the words she sang to me
When I was but a child;

Forgotten the God she loved so well,
Whose love she taught to me;
Forgotten my mother and her song,
"Nearer, My God, to Thee."

My soul is filled with deep remorse,
I'm tired of strife and sin,
I want to turn from worldly chaff
To the God of mother's hymn;

I thank Him for this quiet hour,
Which He has given me,
In which I have again been drawn
"Nearer, My God, to Thee."

Talena Dirkson; Roanridge Reader

MAKE PREDICTIONS OFTEN? **(What is in your future?)**

Jim Stauffer

Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, in 1943 said, "I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."

If and when we predict it is only based on what we truly know at present with an attempt to project it into the future. The Lord, on the other hand possessed unlimited knowledge of past, present and future.

Mark 13:1 *And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! 2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

The Decca Recording Co. made a big mistake when they made this prediction: "We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out." That was their prediction in 1962 concerning a few lads from Liverpool. Their band was called the Beatles.

THIS WE KNOW FOR SURE;

Heb. 9:27 *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

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STEVE WIMP AND J.T. PECK

REMEMBER JUDY ROOT AND HER
FAMILY IN THE PASSING OF HER
SISTER-IN-LAW, CHRISTIE
CARTER.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:
FOLLOWING THE MESSIAH - RON
PECK

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS -
FORGIVENESS - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES IN
AUTHORITY



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10