

XV. THE NECESSITY AND BLESSING OF THE NEW BIRTH: 1 Corinthians 2:14-16



INTRODUCTION

- **John 3:1-3** "1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
- **Christ says to all**, "You must be born again!" **George Whitefield**: "Because you must be born again!" **Q.** But why—why must you and I be born again? **Q.** And what blessings come to us who are born again? **A.** Well that is exactly what God teaches us through Paul in this passage.

BIG IDEA: The necessity and blessings of the New Birth.

I. WHY YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN (v. 14)

I) You must be born again because the unregenerate do not accept the things of the Spirit of God (v. 14a)

1 Corinthians 2:14a "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God,"

- **Children:** Are you still refusing to trust in Jesus and commit yourself to Him? That is because you have not yet been born again. **But there is hope for you!** Christ can make you spiritually alive by His Spirit in an instant! **Oh Lord, make our children spiritually live!**

II) You must be born again because the unregenerate see the things of the Spirit of God as foolish (v. 14b)

1 Corinthians 2:14b "for they are folly to him"

- **Proverbs 27:22** "Crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his folly will not depart from him."

III) You must be born again because the unregenerate are not able to understand the things of the Spirit of God (v. 14c)

1 Corinthians 2:14c "and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."

- **Q. Do you see others who do not accept or receive the things of the Spirit of God?** Those who see them as foolish? Those who do not perceive the the power and truthfulness of the things of God? Maybe you do not have to look farther than your own seat.
- **You must be born again!**

Before we move on to **verses 15 and 16**, I think it would be wise, for a few moments, to dwell on the counterfeits of Regeneration, so that you and I would not be deceived.

II. THE COUNTERFEITS OF THE NEW BIRTH (selected)

Thomas Boston, *Man in His Fourfold State*.

I) Mere education is a counterfeit of the new birth

- **BOSTON:** "Good education is not regeneration. Education may chain up men's lusts, but cannot change their hearts."

II) Moral reformation is a counterfeit of the new birth

- **BOSTON:** "A turning from open profanity, to civility and sobriety, falls short of this saving change. Some are, for a while, very loose, especially in their younger years; but at length they reform, and leave their profane courses. Here is a change, yet only such as may be found in men utterly void of the grace of God. . ."

III) Being dutiful in religious activities is a counterfeit of the new birth

- **BOSTON:** "One may engage in all the outward duties of religion, and yet not be born again. Though lead be cast into various shapes, it remains still but a base metal."
- **Q.** Have you seen these counterfeits and believed they were the new birth?
- **BOYS AND GIRLS:** Every single one of us needs God to do something in us that we cannot control. We need Him to save us from our sin and from ourselves! Just as we needed Jesus to die for our sins and be brought back to life, we need God the Holy Spirit to come and make our dead hearts alive so that we will trust in and submit to Jesus. **Children, you must be born again!**

III. THE BLESSINGS OF THE NEW BIRTH (vv. 15-16)

I) Those who have been born again are able to discern the things of the Spirit of God (v. 15a)

1 Corinthians 2:15a "The spiritual person judges all things,"

- **JOHN TRAPP:** "The poorest idiot, being a sound Christian, goes beyond the most profound ordained ministers that are not sanctified."

Q. What is the New Birth?

In the new birth, God renews our minds, wills, affections, conscience,

memory, and manner of life!

I. IN THE NEW BIRTH, GOD RENEWS OUR MINDS (the spiritual person discerns all things)

- **(I)** Those who have been born again rightly understand **how excellent THE BIBLE is!**
- **(II)** Those who have been born again rightly understand **how glorious GOD is!**
- **(III)** Those who have been born again rightly understand **how evil SIN is!**
- **(IV)** Those who have been born again rightly understand **how miserable THEY are!**
- **(V)** Those who have been born again rightly understand **how beautiful CHRIST is!**
- **(VI)** Those who have been born again rightly understand **how helpful THE SPIRIT is!**
- **(VII)** Those who have been born again rightly understand **how desirable HOLINESS is!**
- **(VIII)** Those who have been born again rightly understand **how empty THE WORLD is!**

II. IN THE NEW BIRTH, GOD ALSO RENEWS OUR WILLS (slaves to righteousness)

III. IN THE NEW BIRTH, GOD ALSO RENEWS OUR AFFECTIONS (love for God/man/holiness)

IV. IN ADDITION, IN THE NEW BIRTH, GOD RENEWS OUR CONSCIENCE (right and wrong)

V. IN THE NEW BIRTH, GOD ALSO RENEWS OUR MEMORY (forget sin/rem. Bible)

VI. IN THE NEW BIRTH, GOD ALSO RENEWS OUR MANNER OF LIFE (friends, jobs, family life, use of possessions, holy duties)

Q. Have you been born again? I do not care as much what you profess; I care what you possess. You may profess to be a Christian, but if you do not possess new life given to you by God, then you are still a son of the devil.

You who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, meditate on these things I have mentioned and worship!

II) Those who have been born again are not to be judged by the unregenerate (v. 15b)

1 Corinthians 2:15b "but is himself to be judged by no one."

- **Q. Do you care what dead men think of you?** Are you going to listen to natural men tell you how to love God and neighbor? Are you going to let those who are unregenerate tell you what the things of the Spirit of God are?
- **Oh to be free of the railings and reviling of the world!** Some of you are still bound to the world and care deeply about their opinion of you. Come outside the camp and suffer with Christ.

III) Those who have been born again have the mind of Christ (v. 16)

1 Corinthians 2:16 "'For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' (Isaiah 40:13) But we have the mind of Christ."

- **MATTHEW HENRY:** "The mind of Christ is the mind of God. He is God, and the principal messenger and prophet of God. And the apostles were empowered by his Spirit to make known his mind to us. And in the holy scriptures the mind of Christ, and the mind of God in Christ, are fully revealed to us."
- **BOYS AND GIRLS:** Do you want to talk with Jesus and know what He thinks and says? That is what the Bible is! And by God's grace we can understand it.

IV. THE MEANS OF THE NEW BIRTH (selected)

- **Regeneration is accomplished BY God the Holy Spirit sovereignly working to make a dead sinner alive, THROUGH the proclamation of the gospel as revealed in the Scriptures, AS Christ crucified is held forth!**

I) Regeneration is accomplished BY God the Holy Spirit sovereignly working to make a dead sinner alive!

- **John 3:8** "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."
- **John 3:12 (Christ, to Nicodemus)** "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"
- **BOSTON:** "As the child is passive in generation, so the child of God is passive in regeneration."

II) Regeneration is accomplished THROUGH the proclamation of the gospel as revealed in the Scriptures!

- **1 Peter 1:23, 25** "you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; . . . And this word is the good news that was preached to you."

III) Regeneration is accomplished AS Christ crucified is held forth!

- **John 3:14-15** "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."
- **John 12:32** "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

APPLICATION

- I) See the sad state of all those who are unregenerate!
- II) See how utterly dependent sinners are on God to save them by sheer mercy!
- III) See the hopeful prospect of all those we preach to and pray for!
 - **Q. You who preach, do you pray? Q. You who pray, do you preach? Q. You who do neither, what are you doing?**

EXHORTATION

- I) You who believe, praise God for causing you to be born again! (1 Peter 1:3a)
 - **1 Peter 1:3** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again."
- II) You who believe, do not neglect the fact that you have been born again!
 - **You who have been granted access to the mind of Christ by the Holy Spirit** speaking to you through the Scriptures, do you neglect it?
 - **Oh take full advantage of the mind of Christ** privately, with your family, with your small group, with the gathered church!
- III) You who believe, if God has caused you to be born again, He will never cause you to die again! (1 Peter 1:3b-5)
 - **1 Peter 1:3-5** "He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 - **On the cross, Christ took your natural self on Himself, along with all the damnation you deserve, and was sacrificed for it.** Christ died in your place, believer, and raised Himself from the dead, so that, in time, God the Holy Spirit would come to you and make you spiritually alive with Christ's life.
- IV) You who believe, make it your business to preach and pray, pray and preach!