

SERMON: 1 Peter 1 Overview -- "Born Again!": The Source (Selection, Sanctification, Seed) and The Surety, Security & Sufferings of Salvation!

Peter A. Muth

MY INTRODUCTION: At THE HEART of Biblical Salvation is the NEW BIRTH; being "born again!" However, many think that the term "born again" represents some Fundamentalist, Protestant "Denomination," but the reality is that no one is a "Christian" (or in the Kingdom of God) unless they are BORN AGAIN! **Here is a Biblically TRUE statement:** "Born once, die twice -- Born twice, die once!" (Author unknown).

IF YOU WERE TO ASK A ROMAN CATHOLIC or a MORMON (or even those in some Protestant Churches like the "Church of Christ" and others) **WHEN & HOW** they were "born again," **THEY WILL REFER YOU TO THEIR "WATER BAPTISM."** In other words, they believe & teach that being "born again" is synonymous with "water baptism" (i.e. Baptismal Regeneration). This is based on a terrible misunderstanding of Jesus' exchange with Nicodemus in John 3, ignoring at the outset that Jesus had NOT YET DIED & RISEN FROM THE DEAD -- WHICH IS WHAT "WATER BAPTISM" SYMBOLIZES -- so there was nothing for Nicodemus to get BAPTIZED INTO!

Even at a quick glance, Jesus clearly taught in John 3:3 that being "born again" **MUST OCCUR FIRST BEFORE ANY MAN HAS THE ABILITY TO "SEE" THE KINGDOM OF GOD,** nevermind "ENTER" it, which He mentions afterwards in v.5! **THE OBVIOUS QUESTION IS:** Why would anyone obey the command of King Jesus to be baptized if they haven't first been "born again," which is the **NECESSARY CONDITION** that gives one the ability to SEE Him for who He is → The King of the Kingdom of God!? It is clear that "the kingdom of God" is where Jesus Christ is King -- a truth that Jesus taught about Himself in Luke 17:20-21 when He said that **"the kingdom of God is in your midst" -- referring to Himself!** >>> Those who mishandle John 3 also **IGNORE THE PLAIN TEACHING** that being "born again" is **THE SOVEREIGN WORK OF THE SPIRIT,** which, in v8, Jesus compares to the "blowing of the wind" that "blows where it wills," making a play on the Greek word, "pneuma," which is used for BOTH "Spirit" & "wind" -- **LETTING US KNOW THAT THE SPIRIT WHO CAUSES US TO BE "BORN AGAIN" IS NOT AT THE BECKON CALL OF MAN, WHETHER A PASTOR or a PRIEST, WHO WOULD THEN DEMAND THAT SPIRIT-REGENERATION > BEING "BORN AGAIN" > OCCURS BECAUSE OF THEIR WATER BAPTISM - whether infant or adult! NO. We are baptized BECAUSE we've been born again, NOT IN ORDER TO GET "BORN AGAIN!"**

Synonymous with this term "born again" is "the washing of rebirth (or "regeneration") and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5) or being "made alive" (Eph. 2:5/Col. 2:13). **IT LITERALLY MEANS** to be "BORN FROM ABOVE" & "BORN OF THE SPIRIT," and it is directly connected to what it means to be salvifically "sanctified," set apart & made positionally holy unto salvation IN Jesus Christ through regeneration!

In John 3:10, Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?" In other words, there must have been something about what Jesus was teaching in the Old Testament that Nicodemus should have known! And there is! **Ecclesiastes 11:5 says,** "As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things." But even more specifically, **Ezekiel 36:25-27** speaks about God coming as the true Shepherd to gather out His scattered sheep from the nations -- "sprinkling clean water" on them -- referring to the cleansing work of the "Spirit" that gives them "a new heart" (lit. a NEW WILL) -- "putting a new spirit" in them -- **AND CAUSING THEM TO OBEY HIM!**

Being "born again" is AT THE HEART OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED: **WE ALL NEED A NEW HEART!** Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit we are all "spiritually dead" (Lk. 9:60), "dead in our trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), and "by nature (not nurture) children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3)...**"BUT GOD,** being rich in mercy, because of His great love...**MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST!"** (Eph. 2:4-5)

THIS ISSUE OF BEING "BORN AGAIN" is no small BIBLICAL SUBJECT with regards to understanding our God, ourselves & this great & merciful salvation that God granted us TO SEE, HEAR, BELIEVE & RECEIVE -- and 1 Peter 1 gives us **THE MOST BIBLICAL EXPOSITION** about the MEANING, the MEANS & the MAGNIFICENT MAGNITUDE of what being "born again to a living hope" actually is -- **ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF SUFFERING AS A CHRISTIAN IN A GOD-HATING, HOSTILE WORLD...so let's jump into this together, and pull out some FAITH-BUILDING & ASSURANCE-BINDING TRUTHS** that should motivate us to LOVE, TRUST & OBEY our God even more today -- as we journey together in our temporary stay here on earth!

WITH THAT...LET'S PRAY FOR GOD'S BLESSING OVER US AND OUR TIME IN HIS WORD!

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I. INTRODUCTION & SCRIPTURE READING (1 Peter 1)

II. **THE SOURCE** of being "born again" (SALVATION)!

A. SOURCE #1: **SELECTION BY GOD** (Read vv. 1-2 in the NIV)

1. v. 1-2a To God's **ELECT** (lit. **SELECTED** or **CHOSEN ONES**), exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been **CHOSEN/ SELECTED...**
 - a. **"ELECT"/ "CHOSEN"/ "SELECTED"**
 - Gk. *eklektos* (ek-lek-tos)
 - "to select, choose," – "properly: selected (chosen from, out of), especially as a deeply personal choice" – literally "chosen out of a personal preference (intention)" [*ekklesia* – **the assembly of the called out ones**]
 - cf. **EPHESIANS 1:4** "For He (God the Father) chose us in Jesus [WHEN? >>>] before the creation of the world [FOR WHAT PURPOSE? >>>] to be holy and blameless in his sight."
 2. v. 2b (CHOSEN/SELECTED) according to the **FOREKNOWLEDGE** of God the Father
 - a. **"FOREKNOWLEDGE":**
 - Gk. *prognōsis/proginōskō* - **pro**: BEFORE / **ginosko/gnosis**: to KNOW; KNOWLEDGE of;
 - to KNOW BEFOREHAND (context determines whether it pertains to "personhood" or "actions/choices" (THIS CONTEXT IS PERSONHOOD; INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF SOMEONE)
 - cf. **ROMANS 8:29** - "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined (marked out before the horizon) to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren"
 - cf. **1 PETER 1:20** (SPEAKING OF JESUS) "For He (NOT HIS ACTIONS) was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you"

B. SOURCE #2 (Cont'd): **SANCTIFICATION THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT...**

1. v. 2b "**through the SANCTIFYING WORK of the Spirit**, [FOR WHAT PURPOSE? >>>] to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with His blood" (cf. Ex. 24:7-8/ Heb. 9:19 "sprinkled the Book and the people" >>> ENTERING THE COVENANT)
 - a. **"SANCTIFYING" WORK:**
 - Gk. *hagiasmos* - the effect of consecration; setting apart: sanctification of heart and life
 - To set apart as holy unto the Lord (positionally & progressively; a holy state of being & a holy life being lived) --> REFERENCE THE "TEMPLE UTENSILS," etc.
 - NOTE: Context determines POSITIONAL sanctification vs. PROGRESSIVE sanctification (THIS CONTEXT OF VERSE 2b IS "POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION")
 - cf. **2 THESSALONIANS 2:13** "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." (POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION)
 - cf. **2 TIMOTHY 1:9** "He has saved us and called us to a holy (*sanctified; set apart*) life—not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. **This grace** was given us in Christ Jesus [WHEN? >>>] before the beginning of time" (POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION)
 - cf. **ROMANS 6:22** (PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION) -- But now that you have been set free (SET APART) from sin and have become slaves of God (i.e. Justification), the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.
 - cf. **JOHN 17:17** (PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION) "Sanctify them by Your truth; Your word is truth!"
 - cf. **1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8** (PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION) v. 3 "...this is the will of God, your sanctification."

C. SOURCE #3 (Cont'd): **SEED of the word** (God's Word; specifically, **THE GOSPEL!**)...

1. v. 23 "for you have been **born again** not of **SEED** which is perishable but WITH **IMPERISHABLE SEED, that is, through THE LIVING AND ENDURING WORD OF GOD.**"

a. "SEED"

- Gk. *spora* - "a sowing; i.e. (by implication) parentage; seed" - to impregnate; i.e. (by implication) to bring forth new life -- contextually, the new birth; born again)
- cf. **1 PETER 1:10-12, 25** "CONCERNING THIS SALVATION, the Prophets, who spoke of THE GRACE that was to come to you...which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them...and they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached THE GOSPEL to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. 25 THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER. And *this is the word which was preached to you.*"
- cf. **JAMES 1:18** "He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created."
- cf. **2 THESSALONIANS 2:14** "It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- cf. **1 CORINTHIANS 2:12-14** "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting (comparing) spiritual truths/words (the gospel) to those who are spiritual. The NATURAL MAN (the person without the Spirit) does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit."
- cf. **ROMANS 10:17** "(Saving) faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Christ; the gospel)." [The CONTEXT is evangelism: the preaching of the "good news" about Jesus: the gospel!]
- cf. **GALATIANS 3:16 (JESUS IS THE "SEED")** -- "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.
- **EPHESIANS 5:25-26** "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by [WHAT?>>>] the washing of water with the word" - (John 15:3 "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you"/ cf. Jn.13:10)
- Ref. **THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND THE SEED** (the "seed" = "the message about the kingdom" -- Matthew 13:19)

III. **THE SURETY & SECURITY of SALVATION** - being "born again" (IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD)!

A. v. 3-5, 8-9 >>> 3 Blessed be [WHAT? >>>] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His [WHAT? >>>] great mercy has [WHAT? >>>] CAUSED US TO BE BORN AGAIN to [WHAT? >>>] a living hope through [WHAT? >>>] the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain [WHAT? >>>] AN INHERITANCE which is [WHAT? >>>] IMPERISHABLE AND UNDEFILED and [WHAT? >>>] WILL NOT FADE AWAY, [WHERE IS THIS INHERITANCE? >>>] RESERVED FOR YOU IN HEAVEN, 5 who are [WHAT? >>>] protected by [WHAT & WHO? >>>] the power of God through faith for [WHAT? >>>] a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 8 Though you have not seen Him, you [WHAT? >>>] love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you [WHAT? >>>] believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, [WHY? >>>] 9 For you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

Does this sound like someone who is UNCERTAIN or INSECURE about WHO he is & WHAT he has, NOW & FOREVER, KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD??? NO! THEN WE SHOULDN'T BE EITHER!!!

IV. THE SUFFERINGS OF OUR SALVATION!

A. vv. 6-7 >>> 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now **for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.** 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though **refined by fire**—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1. **PHILIPPIANS 1:29 (NLT)** “For you have been given not only the privilege of TRUSTING in Christ but also the privilege of SUFFERING for Him.”
2. **1 PETER 4:12-13 >>>** 12 “Beloved, *do not be surprised* at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But *rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings*, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.”
3. **1 PETER 5:10** “And after you have suffered a little while, *the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*”
4. **JAMES 1:2-4 (NLT)** > >> 2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, *consider it an opportunity for great joy.* 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.
5. **JOHN 16:33** “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

B. THE REASON THIS MESSAGE IS **ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT** is because of the **TIME & CIRCUMSTANCES** of when it was written!

- In AD 64-65 the church was being terribly persecuted by Nero...family & friends were tortured & killed, leading to a great scattering -- a dispersion (v. 1)...and Peter himself would soon be martyred, which he fully expected (2 Peter 1:14)! Against this BACKDROP of terrible TRIBULATION, PERSECUTION, GREAT SUFFERING, ANGUISH OF SOUL, FEAR, DOUBT, UNCERTAINTY & INSECURITY, is why Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, decided to open this letter with the AWESOME TRUTH about being “BORN AGAIN” → *making sure that we get our eyes off ourselves and onto The SOURCE of being “born again,”* as well as THE SURETY -- THE CERTAIN HOPE -- and SECURITY of what was so freely given to us, AND KEPT FOR US, by God in His Sovereign mercy & grace!!! >>>**When someone like Peter is writing what he believed could be his last letter, we should pay all the more attention to what is written, with utmost “sober-mindedness” -- HE WANTED US TO KNOW WHO WE ARE, HOW WE GOT THAT WAY AND WHAT TO EXPECT SO WE’RE NOT “SURPRISED...AS THOUGH SOMETHING STRANGE WERE HAPPENING TO US!”**

V. **CLOSING: EXHORTATIONS & ENCOURAGEMENT** from 1 Peter 1:13-15, 20-21

- ✓ PREPARE YOUR MINDS FOR ACTION...
- ✓ KEEP SOBER IN SPIRIT...
- ✓ FIX YOUR HOPE COMPLETELY ON THE GRACE TO BE BROUGHT TO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST...
- ✓ BE OBEDIENT CHILDREN...
- ✓ DO NOT CONFORM -- TO THE FORMER LUSTS WHICH WERE YOURS IN YOUR IGNORANCE...
- ✓ BE HOLY IN ALL YOUR BEHAVIOR...because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”
- ✓ “...Jesus has appeared in these last times for your sake who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, **so that your faith and hope are in God.**”

CAN I GET AN “AMEN!!!???”

QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS?

1 Peter 1

1 To **God's elect**, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, **2 who have been chosen (selected) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with His blood**: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

3 Blessed be **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be BORN AGAIN to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now **for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.** 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though **refined by fire**—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

8 Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, **you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

10 CONCERNING THIS SALVATION, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when **they spoke of the things that have now been told to you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.** Even angels long to look into these things.

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. 20 **For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 **for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but with imperishable seed, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.**

24 For,

"ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.

THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,

25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER."

And this is the word which was preached to you.