

"Regeneration is a change wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the understanding, will and affections of a sinner; which is the commencement of a new kind of life, and which gives another direction to his judgment, desires, pursuits, and conduct." Grace Gems

Happy soul, thought I, you have that which empires cannot purchase—God for your Father, Jesus for your portion, and the Holy Spirit for your Comforter! Robert Hawker *Zion's Pilgrim*

When we offend everybody, we've declared truth without grace. When we offend nobody, we've watered down truth in the name of grace. John 1:14 tells us Jesus came full of grace AND truth. Let's not choose between them, but be characterized by both. Randy Alcorn

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM
AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

36. Q. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins (Rom. 3:24, 25; and 4:6, 7, 8), and accepteth us as righteous in his sight (2 Cor. 5:19, 21), only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Rom. 5:17-19), and received by faith alone (Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

37. Q. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace (1 John 3:1), whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God (John 1:12; Rom. 8:14-17).

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsi@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

Services:

Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

Volume 8, No. 11

March 15, 2015

THE BREATH OF LIFE

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Genesis 2:7

There is nothing any more obvious than the difference between life and death. The picture here is of God forming the body of Adam from the dust of the earth including every detail needed for clear identification as a man. All of the organs were in place and ready to function in accordance with the design of their all wise creator. Animals had already been created and were fully functional. They were not waiting some evolutionary process. But, man was different in that he would bear the image of God. And so it remained to make the ultimate distinction. Man would be made to be a living soul. There was nothing spontaneous about the appearance of life in this previously formed body. It was the breath of God that was forced into the nostrils of Adam and He became a “living soul” completely distinct from all other creatures. The image of God was reproduced in this man.

Many have little difficulty in apprehending the significance of this fact as it is challenged by the human theory of evolution and spontaneous creation. Those who would challenge the Word of God and the creation account present an unbelievable scenario that is willingly accepted by those who elevate themselves above God much as Satan declared he would do. From this we understand that it must be important in the scheme of redemption or it would not be so violently opposed. If they could truly prove their theory then the Breath of Life and the sustainer of life would be successfully denied. But, we are

reminded that He is the creator of all things, the sustainer of all things and has the preeminence in all things including the life that is the light of all men. See Colossians 1:16-18 and John 1:4.

The life of men is special and so is the death. We would note that the difference is fully under the control of God. This is especially brought to our attention is the declaration of Paul: *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 1 Corinthians 15:45.* Although Adam was made a living soul it was by him that sin entered the world: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: Romans 5:12.* Even though Adam continued to function as a man he died and so did all his progeny in that the living relationship between God and man was severed. He still had the powers of vision and hearing. He could walk and talk. He could reason and understand in a limited fashion. But he was cut off from eternal life that is in God alone. There was no sensitivity to those living issues with God. He was dead in sin with no ability to seek after God apart from a miracle of grace. The Last Adam (Jesus Christ, the Son of God) must function to bring life. *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. John 5:21.*

Most assuredly then life is necessary to function and a dead sinner can no more function in response to God than could the form

of Adam apart from the Breath of Life. We draw this conclusion from the clear statements of the Word of God (John 3:3, 3:7, 5:21). We are reminded also of the vision of the valley of dry bones which were miraculously brought together and reassembled until the form was complete. But there was still no life and that came only when the Lord brought breath into them. It is to be noted that no action came from the reconstructed bodies apart from the Breath of Life. Lazarus lay moldering in the grave until the commandment came to come forth.

We search in vain to find any precedent to suggest that movement or action precedes life. Nicodemus was deemed blind to the Kingdom of God and incapable of entering therein. The reason was simple. "Ye must be born again." John further wrote: *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 1 John 3:14.* His message was clear in that the love of the brethren was not the cause of salvation it was an evidence of the life given in regeneration.

We rejoice in the fact that we are saved by Grace through faith. We have it firmly emphasized that it is not of works. We may not separate this from the declaration that we are a

work of creation born with the inclination to good works. Being in Christ is a work of divine creation and that which comes from us is because of the quickening of the Last Adam. It is that which is breathed into our spiritual nostrils and we live in Him. Dead men do not repent. Dead men do not believe. These are the responses of a living soul to that "quickenning Spirit" -- not one dead in trespasses and sins. There was no condition stated when the Apostle declared: *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* Ephesians 2:5.

The body of Adam could not smell a flower or see an animal, let alone name them. It could not behold the beauty of creation or the most surpassing beauty of the Creator. It is in response to the quickening work of the Holy Spirit that one apprehends his justification by the blood of Christ and falls on the mercy of the One who died and rose again.

The question has been raised as to why preach what men cannot do. We would preach as did our Lord. "Repent ye and believe the Gospel" and "Ye must be born again!" And we point men to the mercy of God in Christ alone!
bhs

Creation:

A Reflection of the Glory of God's Son What made the work of creation so "very good" in the eyes of the Father? The answer is that He saw the glory of His beloved Son reflected in all He had made. That all of creation reflected the glory of His Son is confirmed by the fact that the Father spoke the universe into existence. This means that all creation is an expression of His Word. In each star and each insect, the wisdom of God is on display. The Son is also the eternal Word of the Father, and was in the beginning; therefore, the words by which God spoke everything into existence were ultimately a reflection of the Living Word, the Father's well-beloved Son. How beautifully this truth is expressed in Psalm 19:1-3: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." This means that all of creation is the Father's speech to us—a speech that communicates His Word to us every day and night. Thus, the Father's only begotten Son is the focal point of all God's eternal purposes. All things must work together to the accomplishment of the singular and overarching goal of all that the Father has sovereignly purposed. There is therefore nothing arbitrary about the exercise of His sovereignty, for in exercising it He is always aiming for the glory of the Son whom He loves. To accomplish that is the purpose of the Father's sovereign good pleasure. Joel Beeke *The Beauty and Glory of the Father*

The imperativeness of the new birth

"You must be born again!" John 3:7

The imperativeness of the new birth is evident from the fact that man is a fallen creature. Originally he was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26), fitted to enjoy fellowship with Him. But upon his apostasy, he was alienated from his Maker, became unsuited unto the Holy One, and fled from Him. The natural man is totally depraved, a slave of Satan, dead in sin, and, therefore, it is no marvel that he needs to be born again. He is devoid of any love to God, any delight in Him, any relish for heavenly things, any ability to perform spiritual acts.

A miracle of grace, then, must be wrought upon him before he is qualified to enter the Father's house. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people — for those who have been made "fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:12), for without holiness no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

An unregenerated person would be entirely out of harmony with the ineffable purity of the celestial courts, and could no more enjoy their company and activities, than could a deaf man enjoy an oratorio, or a blind man enjoy the beauties of an exquisite sunset. A spiritual kingdom requires a spiritual nature, and in order to the acquisition of that, the natural man must be regenerated — divinely regenerated, for the creature can no more quicken himself than he could give himself a natural being.

Regeneration is no mere outward reformation, process of education, or even religious cultivation. No, it consists of a radical change of heart and transformation of character — the communication of a gracious and holy principle, producing new desires, new capacities, and a new life. Then, do not marvel that in order thereto, a man must be born from above. A. W. Pink



(J. C. Ryle, "Are you regenerate?")

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14

The regenerate man is a holy man. He endeavors to live according to God's will, to do the things that please God, to avoid the things that God hates. His aim and desire is to love God with heart and soul, and mind and strength--and to love his neighbor as himself. His wish is to be continually looking to Christ as his Example as well as his Savior; and to show himself Christ's friend, by obeying whatever He commands.

No doubt he is not perfect. None will tell you that sooner than himself. He groans under the burden of indwelling corruption cleaving to him. He finds an evil principle within him constantly warring against grace, and trying to draw him away from God. Yet, in spite of all short-comings, the average bent and bias of his ways is holy; his doings holy; his tastes holy and his habits holy.

In spite of all his swerving and turning aside, like a ship going against a contrary wind, the general course of his life is in one direction--toward God and for God. He will generally be able to say, with old John Newton, "I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be in another world. But still, I am not what I once used to be! By the grace of God, I am what I am!"



Conversion to God, the fruit of regeneration, occupies all our life, but regeneration itself is effected in an instant. A man hates God-- the Holy Spirit makes him love God. A man is opposed to Christ, he hates his gospel, does not understand it and will not receive it-- the Holy Spirit comes, puts light into his darkened understanding, takes the chain from his bonded will, gives liberty to his conscience, gives life to his dead soul, so that the voice of conscience is heard, and the man becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. And all this is done, mark you, by the instantaneous supernatural influence of God the Holy Spirit working as he wills among the sons of men. C. H. Spurgeon