

Conversion is a Complete Change of Existence

To be “born of God” is to be the subject of an inward change of heart, so complete, that it is like passing into a new existence. It is the introduction into the human soul of a seed from heaven, a new principle, a Divine nature, a new will. Certainly it is no outward bodily alteration; but it is no less certain that it is an entire alteration of the inward man. It adds no new faculties to our minds; but it gives an entirely new bent and bias to our old ones. The tastes and opinions of one “born of God,” his views of sin, of the world, of the Bible, of God, and of Christ, are so thoroughly new, that he is to all intents and purposes what Paul calls “a new creature.”

~ J.C. Ryle

BENJAMIN KEACH’S CATECHISM

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

Q. 9. Are there more gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God. (Deut. 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10)

Q. 10. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory. (1 Cor. 8:6; John 10:30; John 14:9; Acts 5:3,4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

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WXTH-LP 101.7 FM– In Richwood

Services:

Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

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

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THE SIGNS OF AN APOSTLE

Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. 2 Corinthians 12:12

The Apostles of our Lord were a unique group. They stand tall among the long list of patriarchs and prophets who ministered in distinct ways at special times. In that they often deferred to the Old Testament figures, it is to be feared that they are esteemed to be of less significance. Yet, these men were singled out by none other than Christ Himself, personally trained, and given a commission that was faithfully carried out. The impact of their work is certified in the inspired Word of the New Testament and is felt by all who claim an identity with Christ our Lord. The period of their lifetimes is often referred to as the Apostolic era.

Paul referred to himself as “one born out of due time.” His claim of apostleship troubled some in that Peter and the others when looking to replace Judas referred to the necessity of having been in the company from the time of John’s baptism. Paul did not fit that criteria. This may have given rise to objections to his claim. He did not, however, look to men. He deferred his claim and his qualification to none other than the Lord. His eventual acceptance by the others bore witness to the Spirit among them.

Our Lord was questioned regarding His claim to proper authority and especially to be the Messiah. So, it was with the Apostles and Paul in particular. Much of Second Corinthians finds Paul answering such objections and such is the case here. His concern was not for himself and it was not a point of pride. The issue was the

authenticity of the message he preached – the Gospel. Thus, he sought to establish the genuineness of his office that the Word might be believed. His appointment was from the Lord and so was his message. He defended the office: *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: Romans 11:13.* And, he could point to his ministry as bearing powerful and observable evidence that he was an Apostle indeed.

His identity was characterized “in signs, and wonders and mighty deeds.” Some indicate that these are three things with the same meaning. However, the signs indicate the marking of something as significant, the wonder is the effect produced, and the mighty deeds were the evidence of the power of God. It is here that the debate often zeros in on certain occurrences that have both fascinated men and become sensational rather than seeing them as the scriptures design. The result has been multiple perversions of the Gospel and a source for promoting the pride of men. There is no question that these things happened, and they did so as confirmation of the Apostles’ identity and claims. This is a matter of inspired historical record and, we do not need to see them repeated – we have faith and the Word.

But, what of those things taken for granted? That body of truth that we know as the Gospel became the consistent, powerful, and highly effectual teaching of the Apostles and was recognized and accepted based on who they

were by calling and commission, and the evidence of the Spirit of God in them. It was the Christ-centered and Christ exalting message of salvation by grace alone in Christ. Paul's method was to identify the Messiah in the Old Testament and then to show that Jesus was the Christ. Those converts on the day of Pentecost believed the claims of the Gospel and so: *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:42.* The very fact of their continuance constituted a "Sign of the Apostles."

We would note some things which are not normally thought of as signs. Perhaps ranking above them all is that of a personal miracle. We have all witnessed a drastic change in others and wondered at what had taken place. I vividly recall the wonder at the change that was wrought in my own heart following the work of the Spirit upon me. Many noted the changes in me, but none were more amazed than me. My faith became immediately anchored to the Gospel and my confidence rested on Christ alone. This never becomes routine to believers. This was the quickened message that rang out far and wide in that Apostolic era and beyond. The effect was profound as men were powerfully brought to faith in Christ. This was that witnessed by Paul at Corinth: *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 1 Corinthians 2:4.* And, their faith stood in the power of God. Thus, he could say to them: *If I be not an apostle unto*

others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 9:2.

The continuation of a life of faith is a confirmation of the Apostles doctrine and so a sign thereof. Paul's assurance to the Ephesians reflects the thought of permanency. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; Ephesians 2:19-20.*

John Gill focused on this claim of Pauline apostleship in identifying the signs of an apostle thusly: "the doctrine which he preached, the power that attended it, and the success it met with among them."

Our Lord accused the Pharisees of seeking after signs and gave them only one – the Gospel. Some things never change in that men are always looking for some proof aside from true faith. Among those signs that confirmed apostleship, none was greater than the God blessed and Spirit empowered message that we call the Gospel. Every time we witness or hear of a glorious work of grace in the life of a new born child of God we are seeing the greatest of the signs of the Apostles.

Do our expectations rise to the level of the ability of God to work among us? *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Ephesians 1:19. bhs*

ONLY SCRIPTURAL PREACHING IS GOOD PREACHING

I heard of a preacher who very eloquently said that at the conversion of a sinner an angel of God picks up a heavenly quill and flies from God's throne to that fountain filled with Christ's blood, dips his quill into the blood of that fountain and then flies to the Lamb's Book of Life and inscribes therein the name of the newly converted sinner. A hearer objected to the preacher, reminding him that, according to the Scriptures, the names in the Lamb's Book of Life were inscribed therein before the foundation of the

world, thereby declaring the preacher's illustration to be unscriptural. The preacher replied, "The illustration may be unscriptural, but it surely is good preaching!"

Unscriptural preaching is never good preaching. God means it when He says, "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

Only Scriptural preaching is good preaching! Scriptural preaching declares "Thus says the LORD" (e.g., Jeremiah 9:23f) and "It is written" (e.g., Matthew 4:4, 7, 10), not "Thus imagines man" and "It should have been written." Good preaching is "according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4), not "according to man". And it will stand the test of all who "searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). -Daniel Parks

What a declaration is this: "He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth: His word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold? He sendeth out His word, and melteth them: He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow" (Psalm 147:15-18).

The mutations of the elements are beneath God's Sovereign control. It is God who withholds the rain, and it is God who gives the rain when He wills, where He wills, as He wills, and on whom He wills. Weather Bureaus may attempt to give forecasts of the weather, but how frequently God mocks their calculations!

Sun 'spots,' the varying activities of the planets, the appearing and disappearing of comets (to which abnormal weather is sometimes attributed), atmospheric disturbances, are merely secondary causes, for behind them all is God Himself.

Let His Word speak once more:

"And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereon it rain not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the LORD. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the LORD. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up into your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the LORD" (Amos 4:7-10).

Truly, then, God governs inanimate matter. Earth and air, fire and water, hail and snow, stormy winds and angry seas, all perform the word of His power and fulfill His Sovereign pleasure. Therefore, when we complain about the weather we are, in reality, murmuring against God. -from "The Sovereignty of God" by Arthur W. Pink

IF YOU OBEY FOR A THOUSAND YEARS, YOU'RE NO MORE ACCEPTED THAN WHEN YOU FIRST BELIEVED; YOUR ACCEPTANCE IS BASED ON CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND NOT YOURS.

PAUL DAVID TRIPP