

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

Visit Us On The Web
Anderson-church.org

Men Priviledged To Serve:
Sunday, August 6th

Bible Classes

Song Leader
..... Ronnie Phillips
Bible Reading (Exo. 36:31-38)
..... Rodney McCrary
Prayer
..... Scottie Goode

Morning Worship

Song Leader
..... Ronnie Phillips
Prayer
..... Eddie J. Hammond
Lord's Supper
Presiding Steve Parker
Assisting Mark McIntyre
Serving Jimmie Lovell
..... Jim Phillips
..... James McConnell
..... Zack Rogers
Closing Prayer
..... Ray Tucker

Evening Worship

Song Leader
..... Phil Pressnell
Bible Reading (Exo. 37:1-9)
..... Brad Hammond
Prayer
..... Andrew Gatlin
Lord's Supper
..... Steve Parker
..... Mark McIntyre
Closing Prayer
..... Aric Butler

Volume XIII

August 6, 2006

No. 32

Are You A Born Again Christian?

Steve Dewhirst

What other kind is there? Jesus told the night-visitor Nicodemus, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." When expressing his puzzlement, the Lord explained, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3-5).

This rebirth is universally equated with the forgiveness of sins and salvation. Jesus testified of two elements necessary to experience our new birth: water and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is involved in several ways. First, His work of revealing God's will to man is the avenue through which we learn of God's desire to save us. "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth..." (James 1:18). Second, the Spirit "seals" or marks-for-identification those who come to belong to God (Ephesians 1:13). And third, included in this "sealing," the Spirit is "given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32). We may not understand all aspects of the Spirit dwelling in us, but we do know that without the inspired scriptures we could not be saved, for "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

But the other essential element of being born-again is water. The only sense in which water is ever mentioned in connection to a "new life," is when speaking of water baptism for the remission of sins (see Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12-13). It's also interesting to note that many denominational commentators, who personally reject baptism as having any connection to salvation, admit that John 3:3-5 teaches water baptism for that very purpose.

The late Dr. Merrill C. Tenney, well known theologian and long-time lecturer at Wheaton College in Illinois, taught in his

Bible classes that John 3:3-5 teaches water baptism for the remission of sins. To Dr. Tenney, the meaning was so obvious it could not be denied. But when asked how he reconciled the fact that Jesus taught water baptism, while being affiliated with a denomination that denied the importance of it, he replied, "I can't." Well, he was nothing, if not straightforward.

Water baptism is an act of faith that declares our confidence in God to raise us to a new spiritual life, just as He raised Jesus from the grave (Colossians 2:12). We have faith to obey Jesus in baptism because the Holy Spirit inspired men to write God's word for us. The Spirit and water are both essential to being born again; hence, Jesus' words: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." There can be no real Christians, except born-again Christians.

Curiously though, the world has completely redefined the meaning of being born-again. Nowadays it's relatively popular to be "born-again." From politicians and actors wishing to change a "bad boy" image, to our neighbors next door, everyone is being born-again. But this vital soul-saving principle taught by Jesus has been altered to accommodate the "wisdom" of men.

Instead of being born "of water and the Spirit," folks are told to just "accept Jesus as your personal Savior," even though no scripture is produced to support the instruction. Or perhaps people are told to "invite Jesus into your heart." Again, however, no passage can be found to illustrate the correctness of such a move. In fact, nearly anything can be an acceptable means of being "born again," except the things Jesus actually taught!! Conversations can turn downright ugly if one even tries to mention baptism. Instead of being a simple act of faith, baptism has been transformed into a "work" that only ignorant, insincere people use to try to earn their redemption.

And this, despite the words of the apostle

Paul: "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit..." (Titus 3:4-5). Even sectarian writers acknowledge that the "washing of regeneration" is a reference to water baptism. And note that Paul makes a clear distinction between the meritorious works of men on the one hand, and baptism on the other. Baptism, properly understood, is an act of faith, not a "good work" one does to "win points" with God. How can it be that everyone wants to be "born again," but so few seem willing to do what Jesus taught? It must be because modern man wants to take the lead in his own salvation, rather than being led by the Spirit.

At any rate, next time someone asks the familiar question, "Are you a born-again Christian?" look at him dumbly and reply, "What other kind is there?"

-via *The Stonegate Standard*, Port Arthur, Texas



Kingdom Principles

Dee Bowman

The kingdom of God is comprised of His people, those who have given Him a special place in their hearts. "Kingdom" is sometimes used in Scripture to describe the church (Matthew 16:18-f), and sometimes to describe the reign of Christ in the hearts of those who comprise that church (Luke 17:20-21).

The Kingdom of God is a paradox (a seemingly contradictory statement that is nonetheless true). This paradoxical nature of the kingdom is seen in several different ways.

The kingdom of God is intended for the

whole world, but it is small enough to fit into one's heart. God wants all men everywhere to be saved (2 Peter 2:9), but in order for that to happen each person must enshrine Christ as the Lord of their hearts and as the Master of their lives. Each person must decide for himself if he wants to be a part of that kingdom, if he wants to put himself totally at the disposal of Christ, the King.

The kingdom of God is wide enough to admit all men everywhere, but narrow enough to reject all unrighteousness and ungodliness. The kingdom is for a special people. It is intended for all who will come into it, but there must be a rejection of self and a commitment to Christ before that can happen (Matthew 16:24). Thus, those who are selfish and worldly minded, those who can't bring themselves to reject a life of sin and accept His dominion, cannot be a part of the kingdom. The reason is simple: they won't have Him as their King.

The kingdom of God is powerful enough to convict all men everywhere of sin, but gentle enough to forgive any person who will come to the King for pardon. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news that salvation is possible. But that gospel brings bad news before it brings the good. When one hears it and becomes aware of his sin, when he realizes he is lost and can do nothing about it, that news is bad; but when he listens carefully to the remedy for sin (John 3:16; Romans 1:16), he rejoices at the good news that salvation is possible in Christ Jesus. The King of this kingdom is a Great King.

The kingdom of God rejects all unrighteousness and ungodliness but is comprised of those who have been both unrighteous and ungodly. Every citizen of the kingdom is a forgiven sinner. The whole kingdom is comprised of those who were before rebellious and impious before God. But the "blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sins" (2 John 9), and makes it possible for us to enjoy fellowship with His Father. The King of this kingdom forgives sin.

Kingdom language starts with the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount. These revolutionary and paradoxical statements are at once staggering in their truthfulness and astounding in their application. Listen to them.

- * The humble will find the kingdom.
- * Those who mourn will find a place to go for comfort.
- * Those who control their strengths will gain in the end.
- * Those who have an appetite for right things will be satisfied.
- * Those who forebear will find forbearance.
- * Those of pure heart will more clearly view God.
- * Those who seek for peace among their brethren will be brothers to the Prince of Peace.
- * Those who suffer abuse for the kingdom will find the kingdom.

Please note that the Beatitudes begin and end with those who will find the kingdom—the humble will find it; and the dedicated ones will find it.

The kingdom of God, as we are wont to say, is "a prepared place for a prepared people." Let us keep it uppermost in our minds. Let us reverence our King and respect His ways. Let us love our fellow citizens and seek their good. Let us seek those who would be so inclined also. Let us regard the kingdom as our primary concern and the will of the King as our one great hope.

-via *Southside Sunday*; Pasadena, Texas.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Mrytie Williams* was admitted to the hospital on Wednesday morning for dehydration. She will be going to rehab when she is released... *Virginia Lovell* has been sick and not able to be at services... *Ashley Thomas* was sick and not able to be at Bible study Wednesday night *Jack Tucker* is not able to be out as much as he would like ... *Larry Johnson* is confined at home ... *Judy Williams' mother, Flossie Kazzaire*, continues in a nursing facility in

Fayette... *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, is in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

ELDERS/DEACONS MEETING: The elders have scheduled an elders/deacons meeting this afternoon at 4:30p.m.

PREACHING TONIGHT: *Drew Jones*, the young preacher working along with *Mark White* and the *College View church* will be here tonight to preach for us. I know that all of you will enjoy getting to know and hear him.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Phillips: Jim, Brooke, Samuel and Molly Kate* have been out of town this week in Florida... *The Keenons: Jonathan and Lawinda* have been out of town this week... *Steve Parker* has been in Kentucky this past week.

MATTIE BLANCHE WORD: It is with sadness that we note the passing of *Mattie B. Word* this past Wednesday morning. She was 88 years old and if she had lived to the 26th of this month, she would have been 89. Mattie Blanche was a person of cheerful countenance and had been a longtime faithful member of the church here. Although her health was such that she had not been able to attend for several years, she often expressed to me how much she wished she could be here. We will miss her, but are thankful that we were given the opportunity to know her. We want to extend our deepest sympathy to all the family in her passing.

THE RECORD: Attendance for week of July 30th

Sunday: Bible Classes 106
 Morning Worship 135
 Evening Worship 96

Wednesday: Bible Classes 81

Remember:

- What?** Young Adult Home Bible Study
- When?** Tonight following our service.
- Where?** At the home of David & Kerry Cox
- Subject?** Seeking The Lost

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
 Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391

Deacons

Jimmy Glass (256) 247-0571
 Mark McIntyre (256) 233-1953
 Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
 Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
 Larry White (256) 247-0988
 Brian Word (931) 565-3799

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