

Sunday, March 6, 2022—Born Again or Regenerated: Is There a Difference?

Introduction

- This morning I would like to address another subject that often comes up among those who are Pauline dispensationalists in their approach to scripture.
- My goal/purpose in addressing this topic is not answer a specific teacher on the matter. I am not trying to correct anyone or set anyone straight. Rather, I am just trying to explain how I have come to think about this topic. If it challenges what others have said, that is a secondary outcome not my primary intent.
- The question I would like to address is are we “born again” today as members of the body of Christ?
- Historically, I have stayed away from using the terminology because of the confusion associated with it. Many in the evangelical world use it. It is quite common to hear someone refer to themselves as a “born again Christian.” When I hear someone use that phrase, I always ask some clarifying questions to ascertain how that particular person is using the phrase.
- Many who identify as mid-Acts Pauline dispensationalists are against using the phrase “born again.” Some are emphatic in their assertion that members of the body of Christ are not “born again.” These folks hold that it is wrong for a believer in this dispensation to use “born again” terminology. No one is “born again” during the dispensation of grace, according to this position. Some aggressively oppose the application of the phrase to the church and openly confront folks who do so.

Why Is “Born Again” Not For Today?

- The primary argument for why believers are not “born again” during the dispensation of grace is simple. Paul never uses that terminology to describe members of the body of Christ.
- The phrase “born again” occurs three times in scripture.
 - John 3:3, 7
 - I Peter 1:23
- There are no Pauline occurrences of “born again.” Therefore, “born again” is not a Pauline term.
- Exodus 4:22—in order to be “born again” one must have expired an initial birthing. Israel was God’s “firstborn” nation.
 - Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29

- Isaiah 44:1-4; 57:15; 59:20-21—Israel requires the Spirit to enter the kingdom.
- Isaiah 66:7-9—Israel’s believing remnant that will receive the kingdom is a revived and reborn nation.
 - II Peter 1:10-11
- John 3:10—Jesus was speaking to a “master of Israel.” Saying someone is “born again” today is taking John 3 out of its dispensational context.
 - First Birth—Physical Israel
 - Second Birth—Spiritual Israel
- Therefore, being “born again” only applies to national Israel and has no application to the body of Christ. Using the term to describe believers today is borrowing Israel’s language and misrepresenting who we are today as members of the body of Christ.
- Paul does not call members of the body of Christ “born again” therefore we should not either. The body of Christ is the “new creature.”
 - Old things made new is different than old things passed away (II Cor. 5:17).
 - New covenant (born again) is not the same as the new creature.

Our Need For “Regeneration”

- Titus 3:5—is a Pauline verse that says we are saved “by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Those who have a problem with being “born again” presumably would not have the same problem with “regeneration.” After all, “regeneration” is a Pauline word.
- The English word “regeneration” is defined as followed by Noah Webster in his 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language.
 - “New birth by the grace of God; that change by which the will and natural enmity of man to God and his law are subdued, and a principle of supreme love to God and his law, or holy affections, are implanted in the heart.”
- Show other definitions on PowerPoint.
 - OED
 - Middle English Dictionary

- Online Etymological Dictionary
- Beginning with William Tyndale, Bibles in the so-called preserved line render the Greek word as “new birth.”
 - Tyndale
 - Coverdale
 - Matthew
 - Great
 - Geneva
 - Bishops
- John 3:3—the words “born” and “again” are coming from two different Greek words. The word rendered “born” occurs in two Pauline verses.
 - I Corinthians 4:15
 - Philemon 1:10
- The Corinthians and Onesimus were spiritually “begat” through Paul’s ministry. They received a spiritual birth through Paul’s gospel. We they “born again?” No, they were “regenerated.”