

1 Peter 1:3-5 – New Birth Through Jesus Christ's Resurrection
(Primarily v. 3).

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Prayer

Lord God, our loving and gracious heavenly Father, what great things you have done for us your people. Our lives were being battered about like a toy boat on the great crashing waves of the sea. We had no stability and were subject to every pressure and attraction and evil and philosophy that came our way. But then you shined upon us with your eye of love – Jesus, you came into our hearts. The morning star arose in our souls, the blindfolds were removed from our eyes – and we could see; we could see the glory of God in the face of Jesus our Savior.

Oh Lord Jesus, encourage us – we pray in your blessed name, Lord Jesus. Amen.

You and I are very dependent people. We depend on others to grow and harvest the vegetables and fruits that put vitamins on our tables. When we get on a plane we depend on the skill and alertness of the pilots to steer us safely to our landing. When we drive out on the highway, we are dependent on the sobriety and alertness of all those other drivers around us. Should they fail, disaster may come our way.

This is the way our human existence has always been. Adam in the garden was not dependent on the chance collision of atoms and genetic mutations over millions of years to evolve him into a full human creature. No, he was dependent on the creative voice of God to speak him into existence in the sixth day of Creation Week.

Everything in life that happens is dependent on something previous – that cause it to happen.

The wheel invented about 3,500 years before Christ, made possible wagons and later cars.

The invention of the printing press made possible the Reformation of the church in the early 1500's as Martin Luther's 95 Theses were published and sent throughout Europe.

in the early 1950s, after thousands had died from the polio epidemic, the first successful vaccine was created by US physician Jonas Salk. The results were announced on 12 April 1955. By 1957, annual cases dropped from 58 000 to 5600, and by 1961, only 161 cases remained. This great medical breakthrough had dramatic results – thank the Lord!

But today I want us to consider another breakthrough that has blessed humanity, an event that caused other events. One thing led to another. That thing, that event, was the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. That event had far reaching benefits for millions of people. It was truly the cosmic event of all events because it was the basis, the enabling cause of the phenomenon known as “the new birth.” Had Christ not risen from the dead, there would have been no possibility of anyone experiencing his new birth.

What is the “new birth”? It is that spiritual experience which Jesus spoke about when the Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus came to visit Jesus one night. Let’s pick up on their conversation as recorded in John’s Gospel, chapter 3, where Jesus tells Nicodemus:

“...Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again^[a] he cannot see the kingdom of God.”⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?”⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.^[a]⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You^[a] must be born again.’⁸ The wind^[a] blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Jesus is telling Nicodemus, a pious and highly respected religious leader in his nation, that unless he is “born again” he’ll never see the kingdom of God – he’ll be an outside to the kingdom of God unless he is born again. Nicodemus is confused about what Jesus is saying – because he had never experienced this spiritual birth – and Jesus goes on to explain to him that even as he was born physically, he needs to be born in different way, he needs to be born spiritually. In other words, the Spirit of God has to enter his life and produce a spiritual birth in him.

Good religious works, which Nicodemus had many, will not save a person from their sins; only a work of God within the human heart can cleanse it and renew it and make it acceptable to God. The work of the Holy Spirit within a human heart is an invisible work but it is a **necessary work** in order to bring a person from the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan’s dominion, into another kingdom, the kingdom of light, the kingdom where Jesus Christ is Lord. If such a holy and pious individual such as Nicodemus had

to have the new birth to enter the kingdom of God, how much to we also need the new birth.

On a human scale of righteousness, where 100 is the highest score, Nicodemus might have measured an 88, compared to the average Jew of his day who may have measured, we'll say a 58. But all these failed to attain 100 and 100 is required to enter the kingdom of God. No man or woman can ever score 100, only Jesus Christ ever scored 100. So to to enter the kingdom of God another route must be found for sinful humans.

That route was found when God the Father sent his own Son from his side, from his bosom, to take upon himself our human nature and die a human's death and rise from the dead on the third day – thereby defeating death and Satan's grip on humanity and opening up the way to eternal life through Christ's resurrection from the dead.

This is the thesis, the main idea, of this sermon today: **The new birth of believers is dependent on Christ's R'n from the dead.**

So let's look at our text today and see what it is teaching us. I want to zero in on verse 3 and bring out three great truths.

First of all,

I. God the Father is the cause of our new birth.

Verse 3 says, ***³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again...***

Two persons are mentioned here: God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. God is described by two names, "God" and "Father." He is both God and Father. Who is he God and Father of? The text says, "of our Lord Jesus Christ."

So we are immediately plunged into a consideration of the mystery of God's being. Within himself he is not just one person but is, according to this verse, two persons: God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Now by designating Jesus Christ as Lord the NT is assigning to him a divine title that belongs to God. Throughout the OT God is called "Yahweh," usually translated LORD in most our English translations. So the personal name of God, Yahweh or LORD, used thousands of time through out the OT is given to Jesus Christ. IN other words, Jesus Christ is Yahweh come in the flesh, the LORD God of the OT who has come in the flesh to save his people from their sins.

There is withing the triune being of God an eternal relationship: God is the Father of the second person, who is the Son, but this is an eternal relationship. There never was a time when the Father was absent his Son, nor the Son absent his Father. They were

both equal in eternality and divinity. Although the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in this text, he was also present with the Father and the Son in all eternity, so as we look at the revelation of the Bible, especially the final and clear revelation in the NT, we learn that within the eternal being of the one God there are three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all equal in power, glory and dominion.

So as Peter begins this letter, he cannot help but write about God from a Trinitarian standpoint because this is how God has revealed himself. And Peter walked and talked for three years with the incarnated second person of the triune God, with Jesus Christ himself. He, more than many others, had had a face-to-face encounter and experience with Jesus, the Son of God. It was the presence of the incarnate Son of God that began to move the church of the Lord Jesus Christ to a recognition and realization that God's triune nature that was hinted at in the OT is made clear in the NT.

As the church meditated on the great reality of the incarnation, she put down in writing for the edification of God's people, a summary of the NT revelation of the relationship between the Father and the Son in what is known as the Nicene Creed:

We believe in one God,
 the Father almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God,
 begotten from the Father before all ages,
 God from God,
 Light from Light,
 true God from true God...

So in verse 3 Peter writes, ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In other words, praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What is the reason for this blessing, this praise due to his name?

He says, ***According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again...***

So what is the motivating force in God's action here in causing us to be born again? It his great mercy. Notice, it does not say, "according to his great justice he has caused us to be born again." If God treated us with just strict justice, he would condemn us for our sins, that is what we deserve. 'The soul that sins shall die,' says the scriptures. And all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

We humans do not need justice from God, we need mercy from God. What is mercy? It is God's undeserved favor, his gift of salvation, to sinners who deserve wrath and

punishment. But instead, God grants justification and forgiveness – all because of his mercy – his willingness to do something radical to make sinful humans acceptable to him, to qualify them to enter his presence and fellowship.

Titus 3:5 - ⁵ he saved us, [Ⓜ]not because of works done by us in righteousness, but [Ⓜ]according to his own mercy, by [Ⓜ]the washing of regeneration and [Ⓜ]renewal of the Holy Spirit,

Our own merits could never qualify us; we have only sins. But because God is merciful, he makes the way through the death and resurrection of his Son, to qualify sinners to enter his fellowship. Their sinful hearts are changed through the work of the Spirit to give them new birth, and their record of sins is cancelled out, wiped out forever because of Jesus' spilt blood on Calvary's cross. If God were only a just God, he would send the whole human race to hell in a moment. But thankfully he is not only just, but also merciful, and he has demonstrated this in giving us his Son as our redeemer from our sins. Through his death he opened the way of eternal life for those who come in repentance and faith to Jesus Christ. Peter knew first-hand about the mercy of God when Christ came to him on that first resurrection day and forgave and restored him after Peter had denied knowing him three times.

There is no such great mercy in the nature of any of the other gods of humanity as is in Yahweh because none of them are as holy and righteous as the God of the Bible. And they don't have a conception of how sinful humanity is and what a great chasm there is between God and humanity. Christianity needs a merciful God because of the recognized sinfulness of humanity. But mercy is one of God's fundamental attributes. This is how he revealed himself to Moses on the mountain when he proclaimed of himself:

"Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,... Exo. 34:6

II. The R'n of Jesus Christ secured our new birth.

..." he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The R'n signaled that the sacrifice for sin was accepted.

The offering accepted

The great cosmic transaction completed

2 Cor. 5:21 - ²¹ *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*

The people's debt is paid
 All hindrances removed
 Guilt removed/ justification given

The R'n paved the way for the Ascension and outpouring of the Spirit...

The R'n paved the way for Christ's high priestly ministry.

The R'n provides a living Savior who daily fellowships and ministers grace to his people.

Matt. 28:20 - And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The R'n established Christ's kingship to rule over his people.

The R'n means we will one day see our Savior and see his glory.

John 17: 24 ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

III. We have a living hope because Jesus rose from the dead.

... he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Almost always "from the dead" is mentioned. Example:

Gal. 1:1 - Paul, an apostle—not **from** men nor through man, but through **Jesus Christ** and God **the** Father, who raised him **from the dead**—

This shows Jesus' real death, his real R'n, his real substitution in our behalf.

Jesus' R'n is permanent; so is our salvation through repentance and faith in him. Jesus will not die again .

Heb. 7:25 – Consequently, he is able **to** save **to** the uttermost those who draw near **to** God through him, since he always lives **to make intercession** for them.

Rom. 6:10 - ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, ^{once} for all, but the life he lives he lives to God

Christ rose and is alive; therefore our hope is alive and firm. It rests on historical fact: Jesus' R'n from the dead.

Summary

As crops depend on rain
As earth depends on sun for light
As man depends on air to breath...
So we depend on Christ's R'n from the dead to grant us every spiritual blessing in Christ, including and especially the new birth.

As you walk in the presence of Christ by the ministry of the HS, know that Jesus' R'n from the dead secured your new birth in him. As you fellowship and walk with Christ, know that

Christ's ACTION of being raised established the basis of our new birth.

Christ's INTENTION was to save those for whom he died so they would infallibly come in faith to him

THE RESULT OF GOD'S WORKINGS IN HUMANS is that our new birth was secured by Jesus' R'n from the dead.

Let us be gratefully secure that our new birth rests on the sure foundation of Christ's R'n from the dead.

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