

A Saving Birth

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[0 : 00] Music We've been looking at various aspects of the new birth.

! Thus far we have seen the fact that the new birth is necessary, supernatural, scriptural, instantaneous, comprehensive, cleansing, monergistic, and promised.

This evening we will examine the fact that the new birth is a saving birth. Very important. It actually saves. Now that's, I'm sure, evident to most of us in here, and probably all of us, as I look around. And, but the fact is that many in the church in the 21st century in various denominations either denies that fact or is ignorant of it.

Now, I've told this story before, but one of the largest churches in town here, my boss who was a Baptist preacher asked the pastor of that church how they dealt with the atonement.

[1 : 17] And he said, I've never heard of that word. He had a PhD from their seminary. That's pretty basic. It is one thing to be able to tell someone that you are saved, but suppose you are pressed further with the question, saved from what?

That's a whole different avenue to go down. And within the broader reach of Protestantism, you would receive a wide range of answers to that question.

People would be all over the board. Many would be, and probably most, would be unfamiliar with that term, or certainly the term saved, or saved from rot, or even salvation.

Others might say they've been saved from loneliness, or boredom, some other man-centered belief. Robert Shuler would have said, you've been saved from a lack of self-esteem.

And I don't have a clue what Joel Osteen would say. Not a clue. Have you seen these nice ads on the upcoming four-week, four-night series, and on the Easter, on Jesus?

[2 : 29] Did you see the producer? Joel Osteen. He was on Good Morning America. I'm going to get my theology from Mike, and not from Joel.

I'm sorry. The fact is, we've been saved from God. We've been saved from God.

That's troubling. It's a troubling truth to a wide range of people, to churches, to entire denominations. I came to it kicking and screaming, but I got there.

It really came home to me a few years ago when a great minister of our day, Paul Worsher, was invited to conduct a one-week crusade at a church.

And I'm sure given his schedule and demands on his time, it took a lot of coordination to get him there. He arrived there on a Saturday afternoon and was met by the local pastor who drove him to the church, and they did a tour, look at the building, get familiar.

[3 : 35] He was taken to his hotel, and they said, we'll pick you up Sunday morning. Great. He was going to preach all week on the theme of the necessity of an awakening in the person's life.

They need to be awake or come alive to the things of God. He started his message that Sunday morning by telling the congregation that people ascribe many things to the question, what are we saved from?

And they answer the devil, the world, ourselves. There's a variety of other responses. The truth is, and Paul Worsher is no wallflower.

He will tell it like it is. We are saved from the righteous wrath of God. We are saved from God's wrath. We are saved from final judgment and condemnation that comes from God.

We are saved from everlasting punishment meted out by an offended God, a God that we have offended by our sins. And the truth is, we are saved from God.

[4 : 44] And there's only one person in the universe that can save us from God, and that's God. He's the only one that can do it.

No one else can. The gospel, which means good news, and we need some right now, don't we? Good news is that God has saved us from Himself.

And I know, given the size here this evening, we don't have quite as many as we did last time, but that can be disturbing to some. It was difficult, but I came to it.

But the fact that I dealt, had difficulties with it early on, in no way lessened the truthfulness of that reality. How are we saved from the wrath of God?

We are saved from His wrath by the new birth. That's what we've been talking about all these weeks, and we've got about another two after this one.

[5 : 44] Maybe three. Because I've got something in my head for the wrap-up of this. Monday night's kind of going away. We're still going to continue on salvation God's way, but we're going to leave behind the new birth here and connect other things to it.

But we're going to be looking at the fact that the new birth is a saving birth this evening. And what does the word saved even mean?

It means to deliver from imminent danger. People walking around here are clueless how much danger they're in. One man has said, we were talking about that when we got here early, and you know, planet Earth is a desolate graveyard.

We've got people walking around dead. They don't know the danger they're in. It is a term that denotes rescue. If you are saved, you have been rescued from great harm and from eternal destruction.

So God initiates a rescue mission to save someone. I've been on those missions when I was in law enforcement where you're looking for a lost child or a kidnapped victim, someone else.

[7 : 02] The new birth is God's saving grace applied to a lost sinner heading for judgment under God's divine and perfect wrath.

So we are saved from God's wrath and from eternal punishment and we are granted peace with God as a result of so great a salvation.

The peace is always and only through the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the way the Father designed it and that's the way it works. We're going to return this evening to verse 5 of John chapter 1.

We've read this previously. I want to read it again. Then, Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Now can you feel the seriousness with which Jesus is addressing Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel who was ignorant of this?

[8 : 08] Jesus is saying, Listen, Nicodemus, this is true. This is true. He repeats it twice. Jesus is saying, Pay attention. Remember, we said several weeks ago that this really should be translated anyone born of water, even the Spirit.

Born of water by the Spirit of God. And we've mentioned many times during our study, this word or phrase, the kingdom of God. We've been talking about that.

And we haven't spent a lot of time defining the term kingdom of God. So I spent some time in the last few days meditating on that. What does that mean?

The kingdom of God is the sphere over which He reigns. For those born again, more appropriately, born from above, it is the reign of grace within our hearts.

And that grace has been placed there by the Lord Himself. That's where it came from. Put another way, the kingdom of God is a realm of redemption and reconciliation that has occurred between fallen man and a holy God.

[9 : 23] We enter into this realm by divine grace. There's no other way to get there. Jesus even uses the word enter in in His comments to Nicodemus.

And there may be somebody here tonight that's not born again. When I look around, I can't imagine who it would be. I'm not going to try and guess. But let me say, even if that's true, and it probably isn't given this audience, but if it's true, anyone not born again is presently outside the kingdom of God.

They're on the outside and probably not even looking in. They're unconcerned that they're on the outside. Anyone outside the kingdom of God is presently an enemy of the king at war with the king. This truth was first introduced to the human race all the way back in Genesis. All the way back in chapter 3 where the human race fell into sin in the Garden of Eden.

To be outside the kingdom is to be at enmity with God. And our dear brother in Christ, Noah Webster, defined enmity in his 1828 dictionary this way.

[10 : 43] Enmity is the quality of being an enemy. The opposite of friendship, ill will, hatred, unfriendly, dispositions, malevolence.

It is existing in a state of opposition. And just consider these two passages which, by the way, were written millennia apart in Genesis 3.15.

God says, I will put enmity between thee and the woman. And he's talking to the serpent, Satan-filled serpent. I'm going to put enmity between you and the woman.

And then in Romans 8.7, Paul wrote, the carnal mind is enmity against God. It hates God. It is unfriendly.

It is an enemy of God. Now, we all need to know, and we all do know, there is no middle ground when it comes to existence in or out of the kingdom of God.

[11 : 47] We are either inside the kingdom or we are outside the kingdom. There's not a holding pen somewhere. And our good Catholic friends, there's no purgatory.

The Bible has nothing to say about that. We are either at peace with God or we're presently at war with God. There is no neutral territory where people are in a sort of holding pattern until they decide what they want to do.

It doesn't exist. And let me say, if anyone is presently outside the kingdom, so was everyone else at one time in this room. At one time, we all were. So there's obviously hope for anyone, and in Christ, hope is always a settled hope with Him.

And most men in this room and perhaps all have been born again and are in the kingdom of God. Now chew on that for just a moment. Just say to yourself, I'm in the kingdom of God.

We tend to believe that because of our salvation, because we've been born again, that someday we're going to enter into the kingdom of God.

[13 : 03] Brothers, that's not true. That's not the way it works, and we need to adjust our thinking on this point. If you have been born again, born from above, the spiritual birth that came down from God, you are in the kingdom.

You're in the kingdom. Your kingdom citizenship began at rebirth. That's why the Bible says, but our citizenship is in heaven.

Now clearly, we're on planet Earth, right now, and we are still on planet Earth because it fits God's plan for us, and when He is ready for us to enter into the heavenly realm, we go.

He takes us right then. My point is that we are not secondary citizens because we find ourselves still on Earth. We're full citizens in the kingdom.

We just happen to be here right now, ambassadors for Christ. Christ. And we can see from all this the absolute necessity to be born again.

[14 : 12] To be unsaved is to be at war with God. The only reason we're still here is it fits God's plan. And it is absolutely essential that we be born again.

To be unsaved is to be at war with God. To be unsaved is to be under God's wrath. The cross of Christ is the peace treaty signed in blood by the Son of God and His Father.

If you want peace with God, you must be born again from above based upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Within the context of the Lord's discussion with Nicodemus on the new birth, Jesus uttered words that have been cited as the most quoted in all 66 books of the Bible.

We all have it memorized. John 3.16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

To be outside the kingdom is to be perishing. There is no way that truth can be softened and it shouldn't be.

[15 : 28] Don't ever soften that. But the Lord says here if we are believing and again that is trusting committing our life to Christ we are then in a state of not perishing.

We've left that state. We've left it. The entire world has two classes of people. Those who are perishing and those who are not perishing.

And I just love what our dear brother now in heaven Dr. J. Vernon McGee said about this. And I loved him. In his own way he said you are either a saint or you're an ain't.

If you're a saint you ain't an ain't. But if you're an ain't you ain't a saint. And you can use that and say it's original. That's good theology for a country boy.

Raised in Texas shooting rabbits with a .22. Better theology is this. You're either perishing or you're not perishing. And again there's no neutral ground.

[16 : 36] At this moment everyone is either under the wrath or under grace. I mean there's no middle ground. If you're not sure heed the words of John 3.16. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you will not perish.

And that word believe is much stronger we know than its English counterpart. In English the word believe means to intellectually agree with something. Everyone here believes right now those chairs are going to hold you up without breaking.

We really believe that. In Greek the language of the New Testament the word believe means to have faith. It means to trust to a level that you're willing to commit your life to an object.

The object in this case is the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. We looked at this briefly last time and we're going to be looking at it in depth later.

At rebirth God pours into our hearts repentance a turning from sin and faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[17 : 46] Regeneration which is what we're talking about. Rebirth regeneration produces saving faith. There's a lot of people that will say no, no, no saving faith produces regeneration.

Oh, that's the cart before the horse. Regeneration produces saving faith. Rebirth, another word for regeneration, precedes saving faith.

Repentance and faith are triggered by rebirth. faith. Only then do we not perish. When we think of the word perish, we've got to be careful.

There is a new theology and even some conservative churches and denominations have bought into it. I know there was a Baptist church that bought into this and we finally gave them the right Buddha fellowship.

For them, perish is a synonym, I think it was in Kansas City. Perish is a synonym when you were in kindergarten. Perish is a synonym for annihilation.

[18 : 48] They're teaching annihilation. Annihilation means a state of non-existence. Since God would never banish anyone to hell eternally, He just annihilates them. That means that God just dissolves their molecules, they cease to exist.

The Bible never teaches that. Nowhere in the word of God is that taught. The word perish can be defined as a state of ruin existing in a place called hell and that forever.

Perishing is to suffer a conscious and eternal destruction. It is all under the just judgment of God. We begin to see just how serious sin and separation from God is.

To perish is the polar opposite of being saved. To perish is the opposite of having eternal life with God. God. That is what John 3.16 says with the words, not perish, but have eternal life.

Let me say a couple things about hell, not even in my nose. Not even in my nose. I hear guys sometimes say, well, I'm probably going to be in hell, but I'm going to be there with some, I'm going to have good company. No, you're going to be all alone.

[20 : 05] You're going to be all alone. And the only thing that you can hear is reverberating in your ears is, I never knew you depart from me, you worker of iniquity.

That's all you're going to hear, just echoing. Unless you were an abortion doctor or a judge, and then you're going to hear babies crying. I'm convinced of that. Hell, you're all alone.

And there's no, it doesn't end. I heard a description once, and it said this, it came back on.

It's a miracle. I heard this description. Picture a place of total darkness. Now, we're talking about the absence of light.

How many have been to the Carlsbad Caverns? I was there when I was, I was young teenager, with my sister's side of the family. And I don't know if they still do this, but you got down to the bottom, they don't do it anymore.

[21 : 10] You got down to the bottom, and they had little seats on concrete deals, and you sat down, and said, now we're going to turn out the lights.

And it was the absence of light. And the interesting thing is, if you had a machine to measure, there would still be light. light. But, for all practical purposes, the human eyes couldn't pick it up.

It was dark. Wow, it was dark. Picture a place like that. And I read this in a Christian journal one time. Picture this place of absence of light, and you're there, and there's nothing solid.

You can't feel a wall, you can't feel a floor, you can't even move, you're suspended. You're just there. And he went on in that article, and he said, when you've been there a billion millennia, as we measure time, and there's no time, I don't think in heaven or hell, but when you've been there a billion years, as we measure time now, you've not reduced by one second the amount of time you need to stay there.

Wow, that is a frightening, frightening thought. So the opposite of eternal life is eternal perishing. This perishing goes on forever and ever.

[22 : 36] When one is born again by God from above, he goes from a state of perishing to a state of not perishing. And while they don't sense it in the unsaved or in a present state of perishing, even though they're still living on this earth.

Most people, you can't convince they're perishing. Well, God would never do that. Listen to the words of the Holy Spirit written through the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians. The natural man, that's the unsaved man, does not accept the things of the Spirit of God.

Why not? Because they are foolishness to him, and he's not able to understand them, because to understand them, they have to be spiritually discerned, spiritually understood.

You've got to have the Spirit of God explaining to you what that book means to understand it. And the natural man there is the unsaved man. This is the man or woman who has not experienced rebirth.

The Bible written by the Spirit of God is foolishness to him. It is impossible for that lost man to understand the deep truths of God. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal these things, and he does so to God's people.

[23 : 53] Those not born from above are in a state of perishing, and they don't understand that. And you know, this really came home to me when I was listening to some college professors that taught religion.

They were clueless. I'm listening to guys like at Chicago Divinity School. They didn't know what this meant, because they don't have the Spirit of God telling them what it meant. Amazing. Amazing. Those born from above have been rescued from final judgment and delivered into the kingdom of God, safe from eternal perishing.

Listen to the next verse in John's Gospel. Verse 17. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

The primary mission of the Lord Jesus coming to this world in the Incarnation was to seek and save the lost. His was a mission of redemption and regeneration.

[24 : 58] This is one of the reasons we have been spending such a lengthy time on this present topic. His was a mission of salvation. The Father did not send Jesus into the world to judge it or to condemn it.

That comes later. He sent Him so that the elect might be saved through Him. Again, we see the word saved, which is a polar opposite from the word perishing.

Your present status is either you're perishing or being saved. Listen to this. Verse 18. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned.

Boy, that's good news. Latch on to that. But it goes on. But whoever does not believe is condemned already.

Because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. Again, there's no holding pen. God says, well, I'm going to put you over here until you either believe or you don't believe.

[26 : 03] No. That verse couldn't be clear and yet it's seldom quoted. We get John 3.16, but we don't go on. We seem to stop at verse 16 and not quite make it to verse 18.

Whoever in this room or in the world believes in Christ Jesus and His work on the cross will never be condemned. Whoever does not believe is already under condemnation.

It's that simple. This is a very important point. What does a person have to do to be judged by God or come under the wrath of God or be condemned by God? Well, the answer is absolutely nothing. Nothing. He's already there. He just had to be born. All who are members of Adam's fallen race are living their lives in condemnation.

So can I come up with a verse that will give some level encouragement to a lost and presently perishing sinner? Well, what about 2 Corinthians 6.2? Behold, now is the favorable time.

[27 : 07] Behold, now is the day of salvation. Every natural man is perishing and needs to be brought into the grace of God through regeneration and rebirth.

There are only two kinds of people in the world. Those under condemnation, those not under condemnation. Those not under condemnation have been born again. Who is not under condemnation?

John 3.36. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Couldn't be more plain. Whoever does not obey the Son does not see the life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Now, in my thinking, that couldn't be clearer. If you believe in Christ Jesus, remember that's trust, commit your life, have faith in, you have eternal life.

If you are not obeying, you are lost, perishing, and under the wrath of God. Why does the Spirit use the words not obey here? That's troubling. The opposite of believing is disobeying.

[28 : 16] That's the opposite of believing. Remember, God commands all men to be saved. If you're not being saved, you're disobeying that command.

So most people in the world are disobeying because he commands all men to be saved. Brothers, believing in the gospel is not a suggestion.

And it is more than an offer. It is a command from God himself. Most of the world is ignoring that command at this very moment and living in opposition to the living God.

And that is why they are under the wrath of God, perishing. That is why there is an urgency in obeying the command of God today and being saved today.

Tomorrow never comes. People say, well, I'm going to put that off until tomorrow. Tomorrow is a figment of our imagination. When tomorrow gets here, what is it? It's today.

[29 : 19] You see, tomorrow never arrives. Anyone putting off until tomorrow is risking everything. Never put your head on your pillow in open disobedience toward God.

Talk to Him. He holds your very breath in His hand. He causes you to breathe in life-sustaining action. Talk to Him. He has VBE. Very big ears.

He can hear the slightest whispered prayer at 3 o'clock in the morning when you're staring at that dark ceiling and you think, my world is crashing all around me.

It's caving in. It is caving in. And we've all had those experiences. If you haven't, you will. You will. Things always look better at 3 in the afternoon than they do at 3 in the morning.

They just do. It is God who calls all men to repent and believe. It is there we find a place of safety.

[30 : 20] A place of refuge. And by the way, look up that word refuge in your concordance sometime and read every reference in the Psalms to that word. Beautiful word in the Psalms.

It is a place of salvation from the wrath of God. By the way, go back to Paul Worsher. I don't think I finished that story, did I? They told him not to come back.

He finished preaching at noon and he went to his hotel and they came and they said, here's a small check. Don't bother coming back. We don't believe that. We're saved from the devil.

We're not saved from God. The Bible refers to that wrath as divine vengeance. It refers to it as his fierce anger.

It is God's holy fury. People say, well, I can't believe God's furious. Remember what I said. It's holy fury. Perfect, pure.

[31 : 20] Those who are lost in sin have the wrath of God abiding upon them at this very moment. That is why we need to be born again. Born from above. Entering into the kingdom of God is everything.

It is the only true place of safety in the universe. It is a place of rescue. I've heard one guy say, you know, if I could just get to heaven and close the door.

No, no, no. Your security is not in a place. Lucifer and a third of the angels in heaven fell out of heaven. It's not in a place.

It's in a person. The Lord Jesus Christ. That's where your safety is. When we are born again from above, it is God transferring us from one kingdom into another kingdom.

We leave the kingdom of darkness and the domain of Satan. We enter into the kingdom of light that only Christ can provide. We are delivered from being children of the devil to being children of God and it doesn't get any more radical than that.

[32 : 33] That is why the Bible calls those who've experienced the new birth new creatures or new creations in Christ. New things happen.

Listen to John in chapter 8 beginning in verse 34. Truly, truly, I say to you everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

The slave does not remain in the house forever. The son remains forever. So if the son sets you free you will be free indeed. We are not to practice sin.

In the epistle of 1 John he really nails that. And the best translation I ever saw was we are not to continue in sin continually.

Do we sin? Yeah. Unfortunately we do. 1 John chapter 1 tells us that. Because we're still in unredeemed flesh. But we're not to continue in sin continually.

[33 : 39] That would be a practice. When you are born again from above you are freed from the bondage of sin and you're freed from the wages of sin. And what other wages?

Death. Death. Spiritual death. Eternal death. Does that mean we don't ever sin again? No. We still have within us that sin nature.

Wars against the new birth. That's why Paul cried out what a wretched man am I. He also cried out who will deliver me from this body of death.

And I love the Holy Spirit in San Francisco. In Romans 8.1 there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. He took our condemnation. Let me offer a prayer tonight.

Let's bow our heads. Lord time has gotten away from us and I need to close and I realize I'm speaking to the choir tonight. Most if not all these men are saved. If there's some a few or one in my hearing or hear this tape that has not experienced a new birth then my counsel is for them to cry out to God right now.

[34 : 50] Tell the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost that you need to be born again into the family of God. Ask God to bestow mercy. God has an abundance of mercy. And Lord, none of us knows what tomorrow brings.

Right now in this room surrounded by born again men, anyone who's not is as close to the kingdom as they may ever be or ever will be. Don't go another moment without the issue of salvation settled in your heart.

And it can be settled. For most of us here it has been settled because we heeded the very words of Christ who speaks to us. All that the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

Amen. Amen. Amen.