

A Permanent Birth

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[0:00] We have been studying salvation God's way.

And we've been looking at the order of salvation, or in Latin, the order of salvation. And we've been looking at the order of salvation, or in Latin, the order of salvation, the order of salvation.

And tonight is our 22nd lesson. I had some breaks there with Diane and MD Anderson and Christmas, things like that.

And I thought it appropriate for me, let me again mention the Ordo Salutis for our review. We started out with the decrees of God. From there we looked at foreknowledge, predestination, election, which is God's choice of some to salvation.

We've been for a number of weeks now on the effectual call, regeneration, or the new birth. We're going to go get to conversion and talk about repentance and faith.

[1:14] And then we're going to get to justification probably when we start back in the fall. And we're going to be in justification by faith quite a while. That's the foundation of Christian belief, justification by faith.

We'll spend a couple weeks on adoption, placed into the family of God, sanctification, progressive growth in holiness, and we'll be there a while.

We'll talk about perseverance, remaining in Christ. And we'll finish up with glorification, receiving a resurrection body. Now, surprisingly tonight, we're going to conclude our study on the third dot point, being the effectual call or regeneration of the new birth.

And I say we're going to complete our study, sort of. But regeneration is the gateway that leads us to all those other things.

So we'll never abandon regeneration. We'll be touching on it. My apologies for moving so quickly through this point, though. We've only been here about nine weeks. In this last session on the new birth, we're going to look at what is very likely the greatest blessing of the new birth, which comes down from heaven to us from God.

[2:41] And it is the fact that it is a permanent birth. We're going to chew on that this evening. It is a permanent rebirth, if you will.

There are a number of you in here that were saved at an early age. I thank God for parents who exposed their children to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in the home.

My mother used to tell me stories about Jesus. My dad was probably in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, which he pioneered for the company, Phil Petroleum.

That's in the days when he had to leave for 12 to 18 weeks because you didn't just get on an airplane, get there in a few hours and come back. I've done that. But my mother told me stories about Jesus, and we went to church every Sunday morning.

But that's about as far as it went. I was not saved until my early 30s when I was an FBI agent. The idea that I could be permanently saved or eternally secure was not explained to me until sometime later.

[3:54] Probably the first expression I was exposed to was one familiar to us. We've all heard it. And I'm pretty sure Steve Benning told me this, but he said, well, don't worry, once saved, always saved.

We've all heard that. In my walk over the intervening 41 years, I've come to the place where I don't care much for that phrase.

Now, that does not mean that it's untrue, but the problem is that it's been abused and used by many unsaved people that gives them an assurance that is really not theirs to have.

I had a relative who would tell me that at a very young age, he was 12 years old, some buddies invited me to go with them to a Christian concert in Fort Worth.

At the end, these musicians said, we're going to be down there in the front. Y'all come down and we'll talk to you about the Lord. And he wanted to meet the musicians, so he went down there. And one of them said, well, look, just repeat this prayer.

[5:05] It's called the sinner's prayer. Just repeat it after me. And he did. And he said, now you're saved and don't worry about that anymore. So from time to time, I would try to talk to him about Christ or the gospel.

And his basic attitude was, I've got my fire insurance policy against hell at the concert. Don't bother me with any of the Jesus stuff. That was the basic approach that he had.

People sometimes ask me if I believe in once saved, always saved, and I give them a rather startling answer for a Southern Baptist. I say, well, that all depends.

You really haven't given me enough information to make a judgment call. And of course, then they say, well, what more do you need?

And I say, define for me what you mean by the word saved. What do you mean once saved?

[6:08] You tell me what that means to you. And I've had some guys really nail it. And then I'll say to them, yeah, that person is secure. But I've also had them come up with, well, you know, saved is a guy walks down front, he shakes hands with a preacher, and the preacher says, repeat after me.

Or he maybe says a prayer on his own, and the preacher says, you're okay now. Or he gives a whole lot of money to the church. Or in the charismatic world, he speaks in tongues.

You can see a whole list of ways to get saved. So I tell folks, you know, I've got to have some more information rather than just once saved, always saved.

I much prefer the words like eternal security of the believer, even better, perseverance of the saints, even better than that, preservation of the saints.

In reality, the perseverance and the preservation of the saints is of the Spirit of God inside the saints.

[7:15] That's where your eternal security comes from. Holy Spirit takes up residence in us. I would also suggest this evening an alternative phrase that I had never considered until this lesson.

Let's try this one. Once reborn by the Spirit of God, always reborn by the Spirit of God. I kind of like that. I find it comforting that we can rejoice in being in the family of God.

We do fear God, but we fear God as believers, which means we stand or kneel in reverent awe in the presence of that which is absolutely holy.

But as His child, we do not have to fear, and we don't have to hide in the corner and cringe that we're going to be put out of the family.

That's not going to happen. When we are truly born of God, born again from above, through the rebirth by the Holy Spirit, which we've been studying all these weeks, we can have confidence that that rebirth is permanent and forever.

[8:32] So if you've been truly born again, enjoy it. You're one with God. Enjoy it. So tonight we're going to talk about the fact that those reborn into the family of God can never and will never fall from grace.

It's a permanent rebirth. We will never be cast out from God's family. We may be disciplined from time to time. I've been through that, and I dare imagine everybody in this room has been through it. And we should thank God for that. And I base that on the great book of Hebrews, chapter 12. Listen to these words, beginning in verse 5. My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him.

For the Lord disciplines the one He loves and chastises every son whom He receives. It is for discipline that you have to endure.

God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

[9:59] Besides this, we have an earthly father, or we've had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the father of spirits and live?

For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them. But He, that's God, disciplines us for our good that we may share in His holiness.

For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

That is a fantastic section of Scripture. The truth of the matter is, God will always be our Father.

Christ will always be our Lord and Savior and even our elder brother. The Holy Spirit always will be with us, never leave us.

[11:04] Fellow believers will always be our siblings in the Lord, our brothers and sisters in the Lord. So let us return tonight one last time, I won't promise that, to John chapter 3, again verse 3, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

He says we can't even see the kingdom unless there has been a new spiritual birth within us. In verse 5, the Lord Jesus reinforces this fact that we can't even enter into the kingdom unless we have been born from above.

So we can't see it or enter into it unless God has provided salvation to us through the new birth. There is something implied in this truth that is absolutely amazing. we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we have been born again. But I want to turn the tables because the reverse is also true. We cannot exit the kingdom of God once we have been born again into the kingdom of God. That's fantastic news, guys. There's no exit signs in heaven.

[12:27] There's no exit signs there. And we can't exit that kingdom once we're born into it. God never kicks His children out of the kingdom once they are members.

Someone often raises a point, well, wait a minute, what about Judas Iscariot? Well, we need to slow down. Does any thinking person really believe that Judas was ever born again from God?

Absolutely no evidence of that. He was a deceiver. He was a betrayer from the start. And when the Lord Jesus welcomed Judas into the company of disciples, the Lord knew everything that could be known about Judas.

He knew it in the most minute of details, including the betrayal. He saw it all coming very clearly. So what type of life does the Word of God tell us is in the new birth?

That is the most profound question considering the fact that so many people claiming a relationship with Christ do not believe that it is necessarily permanent.

[13:38] I have some amazing conversations with some of my buddies around town that hold to conditional salvation. I was given to John 3, 16, For God so loved the world that gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have conditional life based on the condition they don't mess up.

Well, that's really not in there. Word for word. Then our discussion takes off from there. So let me answer the pivotal question with some additional questions.

If the new birth is the life of God in the soul of man, if the new birth is making a man or a woman who are dead in trespasses and sins alive in Christ, then what kind of life is it?

There are two words that the author of the Bible, the Holy Spirit, who cannot lie, employs that's very descriptive of this life. I've already given it to you. This is the new life of regeneration.

We see these words in John chapter 3 verses 15, 16, 36 elsewhere in John's Gospel. What are those two descriptive words?

[14:51] They are the words eternal life. It is the words eternal life that describes completely the type of life that we are given in the new birth.

We covered this weeks ago but let me remind you what eternal life means. First, eternal life speaks to the quality of life.

It's a quality of life. And number two, eternal life speaks to the duration of life. It is the life that we will experience in heaven.

It's already come to us. Someone has said before we come to heaven, heaven has already come to us. salvation is getting heavenly life into a man or a woman even though they are still on the earth.

At salvation we are indwelt with the life to come and it happens in the now. It is divine life. It is the very life of Christ in the soul of a man.

[16:01] Remember Jesus said I am the way, the truth, and the life. He is the life. His life is eternal life. We are in union with Christ at regeneration, at rebirth.

We are united with Him in eternal life. The life which the Word says is eternal cannot be offered by the world. It cannot be offered by our flesh and it's sure not going to be offered by the devil.

It is a quality of life that does not and cannot originate in the world. This is a fallen world. This is a world dominated by death.

Brothers, we live in a desolate graveyard. We go through our day surrounded by bumping shoulders with people who are dead in trespasses and sins and they don't know it and you try to explain it to them and they don't believe it.

It is the quality of life. Jesus said we might have this life and have it abundantly. It is an overflowing life. Remember what David said in Psalm 23 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

[17:18] That's eternal. This life is full of peace. It's full of joy. It's filled with the knowledge of God. So it is the quality of life and in addition it is the duration of life.

This is eternal life. And let us reason together on this. If you and I received eternal life it is settled eternally. Eternally settled.

And why is this so plain to us and so confusing to others? There are people throughout the church that believe you can lose your salvation. I've had vigorous conversations with and I'm not doubting their salvation.

They love the Lord. They just think you can lose it. There are people throughout the church that believe that. If God gives you eternal life and you have it for five minutes or five years or 50,000 years and then lose it it wasn't eternal life.

Let's call it something else. But it wasn't eternal. I have many friends in the Arminian camp that came out of mostly the Wesleys and they believe conditional salvation and they believe you can lose your salvation once given to you by God.

[18:34] I redo them out of the Bible and when I come to the words eternal life I substitute those words conditional life or temporary life. They squirm a little bit but they never abandon their theology on this point.

Let me say to everyone in here what I say to them. If you can lose your salvation you will. No question. If we can lose our salvation there's not a person in here that will leave here with salvation because there's none of us in here that are fulfilling the greatest commandment of the second greatest commandment.

We always live in violation of those when you use the word all love God with all love your neighbor as yourself. We live in a state of perpetually needing a Savior who has fulfilled those commands and be in Him.

We can't keep it by our own volition for five seconds much less for eternity. I've had people say to me if I can just get to heaven and close the door behind me I will be safe.

Just I want to slam that door shut. Well let me give two answers to that. First look to the words of John 3:36 whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

[19:55] And you note the verb tense there. He was speaking to us in the present tense. Whoever believes eternal life is a present possession.

And there's another problem with the concept of closing the door behind me and I'll be safe once I'm in heaven. Just slam it shut put the lock on. the angel Lucifer the highest created being in the universe.

And I get people that they say oh no no Jesus no Jesus was not created. He's eternal. The highest created being in the universe at that time the angel Lucifer and millions and perhaps billions we don't know of angels who threw in with him what were they thinking fell from heaven.

They were cast out. Your security is not in a place. My security is not in a place. Our security is in a person.

The Lord Jesus Christ it's in a person. A. Hodge from Princeton University from another century son of Charles Hodge from the same university regeneration is a complete and enduring act in itself never to be repeated.

[21:22] It's not going to be repeated. According to Steve Lawson the new birth is never rescinded it is never repealed it is never reversed it is never negated it is never annulled it is never nullified it is never voided it is never invalidated it is never abolished eternal life is that given at rebirth and it will be the same through all the ages to come you'll be as eternally secure a trillion years from now as we measure time and I don't think there'll be any time but as we measure time you'll be just as eternally secure as you are tonight if you're one with Christ it is not like a ping pong ball going back and forth you're never born again and then lose it born again and then lose it nowhere in the Bible is anyone born again again follow me there's you can't name one person who was born again and had to be born again again doesn't happen to be born again means you would have to be unborn again and then born again again

I hope you're taking notes because there's going to be a test at the end of this class and Michael helped you study before you no one ever born again ever returned to spiritual death if anyone

deserve to lose their salvation other than me it was King David in the Old Testament look at his sins look at his sins and you know where it started in the spring when kings went out to fight battles for the Lord David was in Jerusalem so the very first thing he did he disobeyed God's word and hung around Jerusalem looks down sees Bathsheba taking a bath good name for the lady I had a great great great grandmother named Bathsheba he lusted after her he sent a servant down there summoned her when the king says come you go she went committed adultery she became pregnant he tried to deceive her husband tried to get him drunk tried to get him to lay with his wife do anything to mask it he lied to him and then he had him murdered personally

I think he had him murdered in one of the most cruel ways he gave a sealed document to Bathsheba's husband Uriah the Hittite and said take this to the commander of the Lord's army it was his death warrant he didn't break the seal he wouldn't do that he took it obediently and David said get him in the middle of the battle and then withdraw leave him there he'll be killed and he was and he was and I always remember when Nathan the prophet came to him guys I can see this like I was there I can see it I didn't even open my bible to that section this is not King James this is Tom Holland translation and Nathan comes to him and says you know there's a man in your kingdom who's wealthy beyond compare he's got cattle and camels and horses and sheep and goats and they just can't even count and he had one servant who had one little ewe lamb he raised it like his own child he ate it out of his hand and at his table and they loved it like a child and had a visitor come to the rich man so he took the little baby ewe from his servant and killed it and served it and boy

David was furious and he said this man is going to die he pronounced a death sentence on him and he said and before he does he's going to repay four fold what he stole from that servant and then I can see this there's this pregnant pause and David is sitting around the throne and Nathan is just standing there staring at him and after a sufficient amount of time maybe a minute or two Nathan looks at him and he says you are the man and the light bulb comes on and David realizes and he gets down in the dirt and Nathan hammers him and he pronounces four fold judgment on him you know the story well David lost his joy of salvation for a time David lost certain rewards for eternity but he did not lose his salvation he was kept there by God's grace there was no going back to a state of lostness now if you ever want to study repentance read the 51st psalm that's

David repenting of that sin and I read it often the Lord says in John 5 24 truly truly I say to you whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life he does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life you hear those words guys those are amazing words to live by and to take to our spiritual bank he is saying this is true this is true and that alone should be captivating the Lord goes on and says whoever hears my word well that's important that is a presentation of the gospel no one ever say is ever say without hearing the gospel without hearing the seed of truth if it has not been sown into the human heart Romans 10 17 so faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of

[27 : 50] Christ one translation which is very accurate says speeches about Christ when we hear there is a response it is prompted by the Holy Spirit but we must!

believe in what Jesus is telling us believe is the same word in the Greek language as have faith which we will be studying before too long we're going to be looking at that have faith that faith comes from the Father through the Son by the Spirit we've all got Ephesians 2 8 and 9 memorized For by grace you save through faith!

that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest anyone should boast that's where faith comes from it comes as a gift from the triune God we see the Trinity at work in our salvation please note this is much more than mere intellectual knowledge it is more than just knowing some things about God and knowing some things about Jesus this is commitment that is what the word faith in Greek means it goes much beyond English there are thousands of people on earth who've prayed the sinner's prayer by rote and don't have one scintilla of commitment toward the Lord why?

they were never born again they got the cart before the horse remember Jesus and Nicodemus you must be born again that's step one you must be born again saving faith has three elements the mind is one of those elements the heart is one and the will is one it takes the mind the heart and the will with the mind we must know the truth no one is saved without knowing a certain level of truth about the Lord Jesus and his work the cross propitiation the atonement these are basics I've told you about a major church here in this town they don't know what the word atonement means that's Christianity 101 guys you will know the truth and the truth will set you free in our heart we must be

persuaded of the truthfulness of Christ in his gospel this happens deep inside us and the Holy Spirit turns on the light and illuminates our heart we say this is true this is the absolute truth when this happens the will responds and this goes far beyond we're not talking about demon faith here that James talked about not this James James in the Bible he talks about demon faith even the demons believe to a certain level and what do they do they shudder they tremble this is far beyond demon faith demons know the truth but there's no commitment of the will there's no saving faith there's only rejection of that which they know to be true that is why Jesus said in John 5 24 he who hears my words and believes him who sent me has present tense eternal life and to finish that out in the next section there of 24b he does not come into judgment but is passed from death to life present tense there is the eternality of the new birth we pass from death to life that's what the new birth is it's a permanent birth never to be lost

[32:04] I want you to listen to Dr. Sproul when God brings about our spiritual rebirth he does not let anything extinguish that life rather those whom he makes alive he preserves and keeps alive that they might one day reach the goal of which he regenerated them regeneration is permanent if were up to us we could find every possible way to lose our regeneration but God will not allow that to happen he will bring us to the fullness of our redemption when God regenerates somebody he sends his spirit to be with that person permanently when God the Holy Spirit quickens us we can be sure that our salvation is permanent strong words from Dr.

Sproul who's now with the Lord this is consistent with what Jesus said in the upper room discourse and now remember that's just prior to his arrest and crucifixion just hours away and I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever even the spirit of truth that's the Holy Spirit of God Christ is going away he's not going to leave us as orphans he's going to send the Holy Spirit to be with us he says Holy Spirit's going to come you're going to do greater things than I did well you know he did some pretty amazing things but he's talking about extent there Jesus never got over 200 miles from home this church itself has taken the gospel throughout the world through the cooperative program through our own people going the extent is amazing and I came up with this I think I'm going to copyright this does anyone think they can go to hell with the Holy Spirit in them how could you do that you couldn't do it says he's never going to leave you never going to forsake you abide in you for eternity do we take the Holy Spirit to hell with us if we lose our salvation I don't think so not only is that thought bizarre but that would make Jesus out to be a liar and that would disqualify him from being the Savior and Lord he says a name for the Holy Spirit who will be with us forever that is why Paul says in Ephesians that we were sealed by the Spirit of Christ until the day of redemption no one can break that seal Jesus said this whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty!

again it's phenomenal it's a permanent rebirth Charles Spurgeon preached a message where he talked about the sip that satisfies I really like that one sip satisfies forever now one thing about this permanent birth we're going to do perseverance toward the end probably next winter but we're going to get there in more detail than what we've done tonight but let me sum it up this way brothers your rebirth is a necessary birth you have to have it it is a supernatural birth God does it it is a scriptural birth we've been studying it in detail in the word of God old and new testament it is an instantaneous birth a comprehensive birth a cleansing birth it is a sovereign birth a monaristic birth that means one way

God did it mono God not synergistic God and us working together it is a promised birth it is a saving birth it is a transforming birth and it is a permanent birth so let me repeat one more time with all of this being true it's time to enjoy being in the family of God resting in the promise of the Lord that this is a permanent birth a permanent birth so fellas let's close with a word of prayer and we'll be dismissed for the night father we thank you for the day and your grace and your mercy and the peace we have with the Lord Jesus Christ and the father and the indwelling spirit because they have given us a permanent birth through regeneration thank you Lord for the time we've spent in regeneration we're going to move on to conversion repentance and faith all of which are caused by regeneration so I'm sure we'll be going back and forth but Lord we thank you for this time

[37:24] I thank you for these dear men young and old alike and Lord just be with us and bring us back safely next time we pray in Jesus name Amen