

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Gospel Saves Man

(Michael Baker)

I want us to take a moment to think back upon a situation when we sincerely felt hopeless. Sometimes when we think back upon rather unpleasant times, we tend to rationalize with ourselves of the other options we should have chosen. You might even think back upon a time and realize that another option could have removed that hopeless feeling that lingered with you at the time. Let me see if we can illustrate this type of feeling. For example, let us suppose you happened to be on a boat. The majority of people for the entirety of their time on a boat do not think much of the average life preserver. It is there, it is always available, but seldom used. But just what might happen if trouble were to strike and that ship begins to sink? All hope may seem lost, but then you remember that life preserver. When you realize that the life preserver holds the power to save your life, it is a whole lot more valuable whereas it would be otherwise.

Now, let us change gears and think more along the lines of us having a spiritual life preserver. God shows us in His inspired Word that all mankind at one time or another has been disobedient to Him (*Romans 3:23*). In fact, when

we disobey His commands and turn from His righteousness toward the ways of sin, we create separation between ourselves and Him. God has established that the punishment for sin is eternal death. (*Romans 6:23*) But what if I told you there was a spiritual “life preserver” available unto you right now in the Gospel? You would probably want to find out if it is truly possible that the Gospel could save you from your sins.

Jesus instructs Nicodemus by telling him that he must be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God. But the birth Jesus is speaking of is not a physical birth as one might expect. Jesus goes on to state “*unless one is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God*” (*John 3:5*). Nicodemus failed to recognize that one must be born again spiritually to be saved. Thus, if I am not born again in the spirit, I will be lost eternally and condemned to die for my sin. Knowing the eternal blessing of the being born again spiritually, how then can I be born again?

The way in which we can be born of the Spirit is seen in how we must purify our souls in obedience to the Gospel. Peter tells us

in 1 Peter 1:22-23 that when we purify our inner man through our obedience to God's Will, we are born again of incorruptible seed. The Holy Spirit has revealed the gospel to us today, which is the incorruptible seed which we plant within us. The implanted seed then leads to a spiritual birth which occurs when we obey the revealed Truth. Peter says to these Christians, you “purified your souls in obeying the truth” meaning that when these Christians obeyed the Gospel, they were saved. How should I respond to the Gospel?

I must obey the truth in baptism if I seek to be saved by the Gospel. Paul makes mention of this spiritual birth we are discussing in Titus 3:5 showing that we are saved through “*the washing of regeneration*.” When man arrives at the conclusion that his sin has eternally separated himself from God, if he seeks to be joined with God once again, he must be obedient to the Gospel in baptism. Only through this washing of regeneration, which is how we are born again spiritually, are we made right in the sight of God. The beauty of the Gospel is seen in that it is the only spiritual life preserver available to man!