

CONTINUED FAITHFULNESS IS REQUIRED

There are many who have the idea that once a person has been saved from their past sins, they can no longer be eternally lost. Such is far from the truth. Though I have never counted them, and if counted there would be great differences in the number that various one's came up with, it has been said that there are over three hundred warnings in the Bible about falling away from God's grace.

The apostle Paul told the Colossians that though they had been alienated from and enemies of God, they had been reconciled to be presented holy and unblameable, and unreprieveable in His sight (Col. 1:21-22). However, he continued that statement with the words, "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven..." (Col. 1:23). Being presented holy and unblameable in the sight of God is dependant upon one continuing in the faith. Thus, faithfulness is required in order to have eternal life.

Writing to Christians, the Hebrew writer stated, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). He continued later saying, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb. 4:11). Obviously, one can fall.

The apostle Peter wrote, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (II Pet. 2:20-21).

There is no doubt, a child of God still sins. John wrote, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:8, 10). There is really no question as to whether we will sin or not, but only when, how often and what we will do about it. Sin will still separate man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Unless forgiven, that separation will still exist when we reach the judgment. Therefore, when we sin as children of God, we need to confess those sins, repent of them and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; I John 1:9). **Robert**

BEING BORN AGAIN

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:1-3). In verse five, he is told that without this new birth, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Thus, being born again is mandatory or obligatory in order to enter the kingdom of God.

The above text is not the only one that speaks of being born again. Peter spoke of it when he said, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Pet. 1:23). We wish to give thought briefly to this idea of being born again.

The use of the word "again" indicates that one has already been born at least once. Every person to live since Adam and Eve has been born once. That was when they came from their mother's womb. We have all been born physically. However, this next birth that Jesus speaks of is not such a physical birth. Nicodemus ask about the possibility of going back into the womb of one's mother and being born again (John 3:4). Jesus points to this new birth as being a spiritual one rather than another physical one (John 3:5-8).

Now, add to the fact of this new birth being a spiritual one, the fact that the kingdom of God that one must be born again in order to see and enter is also a spiritual one. Recall that Jesus told Pilate, "...My kingdom is not of this world..." (John 18:36), and He told the Pharisees, "...behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). It takes a new spiritual being to enter into that new spiritual kingdom. This kingdom is also called the church and the body (Matt. 16:19; Eph. 1:22-23).

Now, when is one born again, this spiritual new birth? Jesus said it was when one is "born of water and of the Spirit" The apostle Paul told the Corinthians, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13) There we have both the water and the Spirit and the entering into of the body or spiritual kingdom. Paul told the Romans that at the point of baptism one got into Christ (Rom. 6:3). When we are baptized into Christ we have been born again!

Robert