

For remember, time is uncertain! Youth, health, strength, business, riches, power, wisdom, and whatever this world contains--cannot insure it. No, the thread of life is held by the divine hand alone; and God can snap it asunder, without warning, in whatever moment He pleases! -- Samuel Davies

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813 *(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

34. Q. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit (2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14), whereby convincing us of our sin and misery (Acts 2:37), enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ (Acts 26:18), and renewing our wills (Ez. 36:26, 27), he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel (John 6:44, 45; Phil. 2:13).

35. Q. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification (Rom. 8:30), adoption (Eph. 1:5), sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them (1 Cor. 1:30).

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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THY WAY, O GOD

Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? (Psalms 77:13)

When a “way” is described, it is usually spoken of as an attitude with a method. That is, it is not just the steps I am taking, but also the manner in which I am pursuing it. Such thoughts as determination, courage, and confidence, are often expressed or implied. There is a pop song we still hear from time to time entitled “My Way.” As, might be expected from the title the assertion is proudly declared that the writer’s life has been lived in accordance with his determinations. I have cringed in fear for all that believe that they can attain some desirable end by serving their own will and purpose. The song declares, without actually saying it, “I have had no need of God, His mercy, or His grace. Instead, it repeatedly asserts, “I did it my way.”

This raises the question as to whether a man can ever succeed in his “own way.” Were that possible the fact of Jesus Christ coming into the world would have served no real purpose. But we know that in Him, God’s way was perfectly displayed. And that included every aspect of the life and ministry of our Lord which culminated in His death and resurrection. We who believe confidently declare that there is no other way and rightly so. But it is to be feared that the element of worship and sensing the holiness of God may give way to mere definition and affirmation. It is not possible to consider any attribute or any action of God apart from knowing that His way is in the sanctuary – that is the way of holiness.

This assertion comes from the Psalmist on consideration of times when he had forgotten

this wonderful and “wonder-filled” truth about God. He rehearses the scenes of agony that he had experienced. I have often, in times of fear and doubt of myself, been drawn to this Psalm. How easily we give way to questions that ought never to occur in our minds. Troubles can indeed be like his, a “sore that ran in the night, and ceased not.” Inevitably, true believers are returned to considerations of God when His might and power were on display through faith in the promise of God. I am often reminded of the times when my heart sang with the praises and acknowledgments of God’s mercy and grace in Christ my Lord – I too, have called to remembrance my “song in the night.” The Psalmist gratefully acknowledged that his way was a failure (“this is my infirmity”) and resorts to his only hope.

In confirmation of this the Psalmists poses four rhetorical questions all, of which, have “no” for an answer. “Will the Lord cast off forever” (v. 7)? His love for His own will not allow it and it is everlasting (Jeremiah 31:3). “Is His mercy clean gone forever?” (v. 8). Only if God could change from who He is could this be. “Does His promise fail? (v. 8b). We happily sing “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” “Hath He forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?” (v. 9). Our Lord was described as full of grace and truth. God is gracious.

The meditations of the Psalmist led him to the conclusion that he embraces in our text. He recognizes that God’s way is not the way of fallen man and we must be brought along in the

way of our God which is holiness. Moses prayed to know that way: *Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. (Exodus 33:13)*. Moses acknowledged the need of grace and confessed the need to know Him in the way of divine determination. David would pray “Teach me Thy way.” It is evident that he was praying for the “way” in which the Lord dwelt, not a set of step-by-step instructions. In another Psalm we read, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. (Psalms 119:37)*. Again, the focus is upon being turned from a way of sin and death to a way of holiness.

When I hear the term sanctuary I tend to think of a place. Certainly, there were such places in which a sense of the presence of God is either sensed or desired. We think of it in referring to the Tabernacle and often hear it in referring to church auditoriums. The term is a reference to holiness as a way of existence rather than a physical location. It is literally “surrounded by holiness.” Truly, such is the way of our God. Thus, there is necessary emphasis on His holiness in all considerations of the operations of God. He does as He is! He never acts arbitrarily in any way so as to lay aside His character; if He is holy, He is holy in all His ways. How well this is expressed in the Song of Moses, *Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods?*

who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Exodus 15:11).

The ultimate display of “Thy Way,” is to be found in none other than our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ. How well we know scripture, *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)*. In that declaration we are made to see in Him the personification of God’s holiness. We are given the reason for being in awe of the greatness of His person and power. This is not some vague reference here left undefined – He is the way! The Greek scholar Thayer here defines “way” as a way to be travelled and then notes that metaphorically the reference is to a course of conduct or a manner of thinking. When it was said of blind Bartimaeus that he followed Jesus in the way, it was not the roadway from Jericho; it was the way of life experienced in Christ Jesus his Lord.

It was that His way is in the sanctuary that the justice of God was visited upon our Lord for the sins of His people – who believe on Him. He was once offered to bear the sins of many, and it is these who shall see Him appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Our God is Holy and without holiness, no man shall see Him.

In the face of the most severe trials, the greatest tragedies, and the deepest of sorrows, may we remember that He is our “Song in the Night,” and that His way is “in the sanctuary.”
bhs

Let us always keep up our distinction from the world. Not in a spirit of pride or self-righteousness, as if conscious of some supposed superiority in ourselves. But in a meek, lowly, and loving spirit--let us avoid all that is really evil, and abstain from what has the appearance of evil.

Heavenly Father, as You have chosen us out of the world, give us grace to live above the world; and enable us to glorify You in the world! Make us like your beloved Son, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Oh, to live in this world as strangers and pilgrims--as those whose treasure is above, and whose hearts are there also! —James Smith

Being Born Again – Paul Levy

We've dropped being born again from our vocabulary as evangelicals as it smacks of being American from the 1950s and yet the doctrine of regeneration couldn't be more vital. If you've not been born again/regenerated you cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3,5 which fulfils Ezekiel 36:25,26). If you don't understand regeneration you will misunderstand the whole of the gospel.

We need to start with what the term means. Bible words have bible meanings. When you hear the word regeneration, don't think of what they do when they go into a housing estate and renovate and rebuild it. Regeneration is an act of God the Holy Spirit where new life is breathed into a dead sinner to raise him from spiritual death to spiritual life in Christ. Think of what happened to Lazarus, who is dead in the tomb and Christ comes and says, 'Lazarus, come out!' (John 11). Regeneration is a resurrection word.

How does this doctrine help us? The doctrine of regeneration helps us in numerous ways. What happened to you when you became a Christian? You were dead and God made you alive. For you to be converted took an act of Almighty God. You contributed nothing to your salvation and so regeneration rightly understood puts us in our place. It gives us a right understanding of the Christian life that it is from God and for God and to God.

It also helps us with our understanding of evangelism. We don't need better techniques or even more courses, helpful as they may be. The music in your church might not be what you'd like but for your friends, neighbours or family to be converted they need to be born of God (John 1:12-13). You cannot do it! That means we are reliant on God. Regeneration is a sovereign act of God that brings someone from death to life. We can bring them to the Word but only God can bring them to life.

Wonderfully, that bringing to life can take place even from the womb (John the Baptist – Luke 1:42, Samuel – 1 Sam 1). For some of you reading this article you will never have known a time when you didn't love the Lord Jesus but ordinarily the new birth comes about in the context of effectual calling. That is, as someone hears the life-giving Word of Christ the Holy Spirit illuminates the truth and significance of the gospel as a message from God himself. It is through that they are born again.

Often we don't know when we were regenerated. The Bible doesn't ask you when you were regenerated but the Bible does ask you if there is evidence of regeneration in terms of an outward manifestation of faith and repentance, what we tend to call conversion. For many of us we look back to a night on camp and we date our 'conversion' back to camp but if we are to think more biblically I suspect many of us were regenerated way before we went on camp.

What should be the results of regeneration? Faith in Christ and a love for him, a wanting to be obedient to his Word, a hatred of sin and a desire for holiness, a love for Christ's church. (1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18). Regeneration is the beginning grace. It takes place prior to faith. We repent and believe because we've been born again. When we understand something of what the Holy Spirit has done for us in regeneration we must be moved to say with John Murray, 'Blessed be God that the gospel of Christ is one of sovereign, efficacious, irresistible regeneration.'

**BUT THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE: LET ALL THE EARTH KEEP SILENCE BEFORE HIM.
(HABAKKUK 2:20)**