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## BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD

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### Ye Must Be Born Again

by

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Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." This was not just an arbitrary statement by our Lord. Our Lord said so because He expressed a most vital truth.

We must be born again because of our nature. We must be born again because of God's nature. Our nature, our life and our spirit is such that we must be born again ( regenerated) and quickened by the Spirit of God to be made partakers of the nature and spirit of God.

One would think when people are presented with the invitation from the Scriptures to receive the salvation the Lord has provided for them, and having learned that frail, sinful and finite man could be made a partaker of the eternal nature of God they would eagerly receive the priceless gift of eternal life. After all, we do everything imaginable to hold on to this old physical life which at best is brief and must go. Furthermore, there comes a time when we thank God that we can depart this physical life.

Here is one Scripture in which the Lord Jesus offered eternal life:

"Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

Now this is not the best that you have stretched over to eternity. The best you have and are will never do, for it is not good. The eternal life promised in the Scriptures is the life of God—His Spirit and His nature. This is God's gift to man.

In this article we shall deal with the subject of the New Birth in a little different light than you might expect because we believe we have come up to a time when the only people who are going to survive physically are those who have been born again, regenerated.

We are moving rapidly into a time when only the people who have the Spirit of God can survive. At first such a thought might make one conclude that only a few can survive. Let us remember therefore that the Spirit of God can do much in a short period of time. And according to the Scriptures, a great host of people are going to see this and they will respond gladly to the greatest of all invitations to mortal man.

There is a passage over in Hebrews which reads like this: Wherefore we receiving a kingdom..."That is what is coming. Don't be deceived by scare propaganda given out by so many. We are not going into the kingdom of some great antichrist. We are moving

up to the time when the Kingdom of God is going to be manifested, and that in spite of what conditions look like now.

The Scripture just cited reads in full:

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire." It is found in Hebrews 12:28,29.

Let us rid ourselves of the idea that God Almighty is going to have difficulty in cleansing this old earth when the time comes. He will have no difficulty whatsoever. Do you know that the present manifestation of evil and wickedness is nothing more or less than pressure from God Almighty in bringing evil to the surface for its destruction, for its elimination?

As believers we must see this. We must believe it. If we as believers are going to live through this period, honoring God and being of blessing to our fellowmen, we must understand and believe that "our God is a consuming fire."

The examples that we have throughout Bible history substantiate the truth that our God is a consuming fire—not a literal fire such as that which consumes material things. No indeed. At Mount Sinai the people of Israel were penetrated by the fire of God's presence and they cried,

"This will consume us. We will die if this presence of God continues with us."

"And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel" (Exodus 24:17). This penetrating fire reached into their hearts and souls.

Peter speaks of this in II Peter 3:7—"But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

In other words, Peter foretells a fire that will be the undoing, the breaking up and consuming of wicked men. The word "perdition" means to break up, destroy, and eliminate. We believe this is the fire of the Holy Spirit, which is the fire of God's presence.

Anyone who has experienced conviction for sin—and you have if you are now in Christ—know a little about this consuming fire. Now, of course, in our individual cases the fire of God's presence was of just sufficient measure so we could realize just how sinful this frail flesh of ours really is. However, there is coming a time when the presence of God will be manifested on earth, doing the same thing to all mankind as it did to our forefathers at Mount Sinai. That is one reason why we must be born again.

Certainly you must be born again to be a Christian! One cannot be a Christian in reality without having experienced the New Birth, without having made a decision to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. We believe we are moving into a time when we must be quickened, regenerated by the Spirit of God if we are going to survive and live to go into the new order here on earth.

Peter in the same chapter we just quoted from, tells of another fire in verse 10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Peter is not teaching that everything in the physical earth and the universe itself is going to be burned up. He continues in verse 11:

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

There is going to be a rearrangement of the basic elements, as someone has put it, and the new composition will result in a cleansed, renewed heaven and earth. Peter deals with the physical earth in II Peter 3:10. He tells of a fire which may be atomic or it may be some other mysterious fire which will be released, resulting in the rearranging or changing of the elements. Even now men are talking about these changes and of the elements being disturbed and rearranged. No doubt but that is what Peter is writing about here.

Sickness, disease and violent weather caused by the present arrangement of the elements is to disappear. The present arrangement of the elements causes the behaviors we have in the earth, including the behavior of the minds and bodies of mortals.

These, Peter says, are to be dissolved. He asks the believer,

What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

He continues, "Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" ( or, a renewed heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness).

Over in Psalm 21:8-10 we have a prophecy pertaining to the very same thing. And remember the writers of the New Scriptures repeat what is found in the Old for the Holy Spirit takes from the Old Scriptures to open up the New Scriptures, thus amplifying the teaching of the Word. That is what Paul did in all his writings. So many have an idea that Paul had a vision or dream or that he fell into a trance when the Lord gave him the church doctrines. Oh no, my friend! The Holy Spirit opened up the message of the church to Paul from the Old Scriptures Paul had no New Scriptures in his day.

Psalm 21:8-10: "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.:

The great problem of today is, if we could only find out our enemies. If we could but get our hands on our enemies, those who are conspiring against us. Now who are they? Where are they? How can we find them out?

It tells us here in Psalm 21 that the Lord Himself will find them out since their very nature will draw the fire of God. No matter how secret, how hidden or how much in the background our enemies might be their very nature, their very attitude, their thought life and frame of mind will draw the wrath and the fire of God. Didn't the Psalmist tell us, "Thou shalt make them as a fiery furnace?"

Yes, these people will find themselves in an oven—a situation and a predicament—with no escape, no way out. "The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them."

Twice in this one passage we find that when it comes time for the cleansing of this earth that the Lord, as Peter also said, will use fire. And we know very well that if this earth is going to be cleansed something will transpire which will affect the very nature of man. Atomic fire does not do this and neither does literal fire. These might burn up the buildings and destroy a multitude of people but people are not changed in mind by this type of consummation for it cannot get to the root of our difficulty. The root of our difficulty is our nature, the inherent depraved and fallen nature of man. There must be a fire that gets to the root of it all.

"Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, their seed from among the children of men." Do you believe that? We do.

There is neither a political party nor any organization of men that can get at the root of our difficulty today. Yet that doesn't mean that we should not be good soldiers and good patriots and do the thing which is right, taking our stand on every issue. Nevertheless, my friend, it will take more than we can do. We must believe the promise that their fruit shall be destroyed, removed from the earth.

The things that our enemies have planned will just about be realized when the fire of God's presence will turn these plans into ashes.

Sometimes we get the idea that the Almighty is having a terrible time in handling finite man. We learn from the Scriptures, "For they intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device," but the Psalmist continues, "which they are not able to perform," God can handle both men and situations. Yes, indeed!

In the 9th chapter of Luke you recall, the Lord and His disciples went to a certain place and upon arriving there, no one invited them in. The frustrated disciples asked the Lord. "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" Now that question isn't as crazy and far-fetched as one might imagine at first thought, not paying attention to many passages in the Old Scriptures.

It is well to keep in mind the teaching which the disciples had received. Jesus had taught them from the Old Scriptures and they were aware of the message of restoration for the Kingdom though they did not at that time understand the message of personal salvation for "whosoever will" nor the Church Age.

They were familiar with the Gospel of the Kingdom which taught the cleansing of the earth by fire and they were hoping that the time for the revelation of the Kingdom had arrived. So you see there was more intelligent thought in their question than one might first think. However Jesus did rebuke them with, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."

When Jesus came the first time, He came to offer salvation and regeneration. This has now been offered for two thousand years. Yet the disciples had scripture for what they were thinking, only they were a little ahead of time. The Church Age was to precede the Kingdom of God on earth.

Perhaps the disciples had given much thought to the last chapter of Malachi, verse 1: "Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

There isn't too much a man can do when confronted with even ordinary fire. And this fire to come is not an ordinary fire. We believe fire is used as a symbol of God's presence. God's presence is one thing that the Communists, the subversives and our enemies in general are unable to cope with. This fire of God's presence is a very real thing.

We have now come up to the end of the age when the issue of regeneration is going to be settle by everyone, one way or the other. If one is not regenerated by the Spirit of God the fire of God's presence will consume one. It will be a painful and horrible ordeal to go through...

"Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud...all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts..."

Millions of people in America are not proud against the Lord though multitudes are in ignorance. Psalm 21 identified the proud as the Lord's enemies, those who hated Him. Yes, I know about the depraved, fallen nature of man, but there is a difference of attitude among people toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is particularly true of the Anglo-Saxons.

They do not hate the Lord Jesus Christ. Revival after revival has been experienced in Anglo-Saxondom throughout their history because their hearts have responded to the Spirit of God.

The wilful, deliberate opposition to the Word of God is what constitutes wickedness and that is what is meant by doing wickedly in the passages of scripture we have considered. We repeat, if millions of Americans would, if they could but hear the Gospel of the Kingdom with its message of redemption, reconciliation and the national message, quickly accept it.

The fire of God's presence will not literally burn up people. It will burn and eat away wickedness. As mentioned before, the very nature of the wicked will draw the consuming fire of God's wrath just as a magnet draws steel to itself. It will leave the wicked with neither root nor branch. What tremendous truth, is it not? This consuming fire is the only thing that will really clean up the situation in which we find ourselves. When one thinks of the difficulties we are in and what our State Department has led us into, what they are doing to Latin America, what they have in mind for Germany, and then consider the Cuban situation and so forth, one cannot but realize that the only thing that can possibly change the prevailing circumstances is the fire that Malachi tells us of.

There will be no deliverance, no cleansing apart from God's intervention. The wicked are so entrenched and they have infiltrated every nook and crook—yes, even every crevice—in government, education and religion, that only God Himself can correct these evils, and this He has promised to do by the fire of His presence.

Let us note what will happen to the believer:

"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."

The fire that will consume, integrate and burn to ashes the wicked is the same fire which will energize, quicken, strengthen, revitalize those whose minds are in tune with God and are thinking rightly. The wicked will be "ashes under the soles of your feet" in the day of cleansing by fire.

Aren't you glad that the Scriptures tell us that God "shall do this?" Unless you are scripturally familiar with God's performances you have but a vague conception of His power and what He intends to do. Because there is such a great lack of knowledge concerning the Scriptures people do not have the comfort and understanding God intended them to have. The promises that God has given of cleansing and deliverance should be as real to the believer as John 3:16 is for personal salvation.

Yes, the fire of God will take care of the wicked once and for all time. "They shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I (God Almighty) shall do this."

We are moving rapidly into a day when Christians are not going to ask one another about their respective denominational bounds but rather, "Where do you stand on the deity of the Son of God and His virgin birth?"

Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died as our personal Saviour is a Christian. Jesus did not die as a man. He died as the Son of God for our sins. Jesus took our sentence of death, atoning for our sins.

You are born again when you accept Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour, the Son of God dying and atoning for your sins.

Joy and peace in believing will flood your heart as you realize you have been born again through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. When you believe God for anything, whether for the soul or anything else, faith witnesses to this transaction with joy and peace of heart.

Ask yourself, "Do I believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died for me?" If the answer is "Yes," then you have inescapable joy and peace in your heart.

We are coming to the time when men, women and children will be confronted with that question not only in churches but in every sphere of activity. It must be faced, each must give his answer.

The great Deceiver will make ample room for culture, education, religion, refinement and about everything else one can name, but he will have none of the Son of God as Saviour. Yet the Son of God is and will continue to be the issue.

There is no substitute for a little knowledge and a little understanding when it comes to personal salvation. Many people have missed real regeneration because they have imagined they must experience some great emotional surge. A certain amount of instruction and doctrine is necessary. Your intellect will be satisfied. The New Birth is brought about by the Word of God.

Peter puts it this way:

"Forasmuch as ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18,19)..

