

#42 FORUM POST ON CONFIRMATION

Dear All,

I am going to make a few comments on the statements Mr. Ritenbaugh made in the post above.

Mr. Ritenbaugh said:

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

(1) And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. (2) I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; (3) for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

Despite their having become Christians through baptism and the laying on of hands, these Corinthians had retained their pre-conversion natures. How do we know this? It exposed itself in their carnal behavior! As Paul says, they were acting just like other people who had not received God's grace.

Their conversion had never really left the starting gate because they had failed to continue in the process of spiritual transformation. The author of Hebrews explains what must occur:

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

At the time Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, the spirit of anti-Christ had not yet invaded the churches. Because of such, the Corinthian believers had not yet "fallen away" and lost their salvation. However, they were still being governed by their carnal nature and it is the carnal nature that causes the spiritual blindness of mankind. All believers remain carnal after entering the church. Only the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Latter Rain) destroys mankind's carnal nature. Because of the remaining carnality of the "called out" Corinthians, they had no ability to walk in the truth Paul was teaching them.

For the Corinthians believers who had also been chosen, their "election" as First Fruits was still waiting to be "confirmed" with the Latter Rain. Only this event will convert a believer. A believer is not converted at the time they receive the Early Rain of the Spirit.

Paul taught on this subject earlier in chapter 1:

1Cor 1:4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; 8 who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says a lot in these five verses. The phrase "testimony was confirmed in you" is a reference to when the Corinthians received the Early Rain of the Spirit, made a confession of faith and were called out from the world. At that point, they became "babes in Christ" who needed the milk of the Word. They had just begun their journey on the Pathway to Salvation.

In verse 7, Paul says that they were "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ". This is referring to the Second Coming of Christ when Christ comes to a "called out" believer (if they are also "chosen") to confirm their election by giving them the Latter Rain of the Spirit. It is only at this point that the believer will be converted and made "blameless in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (the Day of the Lord).

The "coming of Christ" and the "Day of the Lord" are two separate spiritual events. The "coming of the Lord" brings the Latter Rain/conversion to a believer and the Day of the Lord brings judgment to them. The "coming of Christ" happens first and will make the chosen believer ready for the Day of the Lord so that they will no longer be under the Law. They will still experience the judgment of the Day of the Lord but it will not be done in wrath. This judgment is more commonly referred to as "chastisement" and is what Christ uses to teach a converted believer His righteousness.

The verse below references this judgment:

Isa 26:9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

The spiritual term "earth" is a symbol for mankind's spiritual nature. In this verse, it is speaking of the New Earth and not the Old Earth.

The Old Earth represents mankind's carnal spiritual nature. It is destroyed (shown Rev 18) when a believer is converted with the Latter Rain. The New Earth is the new spiritual nature which the Holy Spirit gives a converted believer. From the judgments which come from the New Earth (Holy Spirit), the converted believer will develop the "mind of Christ" and will only then be able to walk in truth and by the Spirit. This is true worship (John 4:24) and it happens 24/7 in the life of a spiritually mature converted believer.

Note: the carnal mind of a believer is not destroyed at the moment of conversion as is the carnal spiritual nature. The carnal mind will slowly die as the judgments which come from the New Earth occur within the believer. It is a spiritual process.

John the Baptist is a "type" of the Old Man and He said it like this:

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

The carnal mind (Old Man) decreases as the mind of Christ (New Man) within a converted believer increases. This transition is caused by the chastising judgment of Christ which comes from the new spiritual nature the Holy Spirit gives a converted believer.

Note: This chastening judgment is also symbolized as the 1000 years reign of Christ. That number is understood as 10x10x10. Ten represents “completeness” and three represents a spiritual process. The 1000 years reign of Christ in Revelation chapter 20 represents this process of judgment all the Elect experience.

Mr. Ritenbaugh said:

Conversion, then, is the process of exercising our senses, not the five senses, but the mental and spiritual faculties of reason, understanding, and judgment. If we are not making judgments about events that are happening in our homes, in our communities, in our workplaces—if we are not determining whether they are right or wrong, and if we are not endeavoring to correct those that are wrong, then we are failing in our conversion. We are, in fact, in danger of neglecting our salvation and drifting away.

Conversion is not a spiritual process as Mr. Ritenbaugh states. Conversion happens in a moment of time. It happens when a called out believer receives the Latter Rain of the Spirit. It is at that time a believer’s carnal spiritual nature is destroyed and is replaced with the new nature which the Holy Spirit gives them.

Christ mentions this in the verses below:

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Satan desires to have all of Christ’s Elect and he will for a short time because it is a step along the Pathway to Salvation the Elect will travel. As I said, conversion happens when a believer receives the Latter Rain of the Spirit. But before that conversion event happens, Satan will “have” every believer since all believers remain governed by their carnal nature after they are called out from the world.

Satan feeds on the dust of the ground (mankind’s carnality) and while a believer remains in this carnal spiritual state, Satan will deceive them and “have” them all – there are no exceptions!

Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Before Peter was converted on the Day of Pentecost, Peter “typed” the “falling away” that every believer will experience:

Luke 22:33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Peter denied Christ “three” times that very night. The number three is a spiritual symbol for a spiritual process. In this case, it is the spiritual process of falling away.

Once Peter was converted on the Day of Pentecost though, his salvation was secure. In other words, once a believer is converted, they cannot ever fall away again and lose their salvation as they did after receiving the Early Rain.

Mr. Ritenbaugh said:

The writer, however, is not finished with his instruction. In the next chapter, he shows them what they need to do:

We are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:9-12)

Notice what he encourages them to do: to show diligence, that is, "earnestness," "zeal," "deep commitment with eagerness." He advises them to dedicate their lives to this spiritual transformation and to stick with it to the end, as this is what those who will inherit the promises do. In other words, they need to launch zealously into a campaign of regaining all their lost ground. As he implies, Christianity is not a religion for the lazy.

Yes, Paul encourages all called out believers in his letters to have a zealous commitment to their faith in Christ. Paul does this because he knows that the spirit of anti-Christ is coming which will eventually cause all called out believers to fall away. Paul teaches on "falling away" earlier in Hebrews chapter 6. When the spirit of anti-Christ eventually came, the wolves spared none of the flock and the churches the Apostles started became apostate. Since that time of apostasy, nothing has changed within the church. However, at the time of Paul's writings, the spirit of anti-Christ had not yet come and the believers in his churches were still "babes in Christ". Paul wanted them to "patiently endure" (Heb 6:15) until "perfection comes" (Heb 6:1). Perfection comes when a called out believer is converted at the time they receive the Latter Rain.

From the comments of Mr. Ritenbaugh, it is clear that he does not understand what it means to be converted nor does he understand when conversion happens to a believer. Also, conversion does not happen by our own works – it happens solely by the work of Christ within us.

Joe