

26-0802a - Detailed Summary

26-0802a - *Two Births*, Mike Mathis

Bible Readers: John Kessler and Kevin Woosley

This detailed summary by Grok, xAI, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

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Two Births

Scripture Readings

1st Reader (0:04 - 0:28): John Kessler

John 1:12-13: The first scripture reader, identified as John K, opened the service with a greeting of “Good morning” and announced that the first reading would come from the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 12 and 13, read from the NIV translation. He read the text: “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision, or of a husband’s will, but born of God.” He closed the reading by declaring, “And that’s the word of the Lord.”

2nd Reader (0:33 - 1:19): Kevin Woosley

John 3:3-6: Kevin then presented the second scripture reading, taken from the book of John, chapter 3, verses 3 through 6. The passage records Jesus answering Nicodemus with the words, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus responded by asking how a man can be born when he is old and whether he can enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born. Jesus replied, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 33:21), Preacher: Mike Mathis

(1:24-6:23) Sermon Introduction: Two Births and Personal Testimony

Preacher Mike greeted everyone present in the building as well as those listening by telephone and announced that the morning’s message would concern two births. He explained that he was speaking on this subject because he currently finds himself between two births. The first is his fleshly birth, which is only a few days away; specifically, one week from the following day would be his birthday. The second is his spiritual birth. He noted that he had no choice in his physical birth. He has been blessed to live seventy-eight years, meaning that on his upcoming birthday he will turn seventy-nine years old. Addressing those who have been born again, as Jesus described to Nicodemus in John 3, Mike asked whether they could tell someone the exact month, day, and year when they became a Christian—that is, when they were born again. He clarified that the common phrase “born-again Christian” is a misnomer, because if a person has been born again, that person is already a Christian. He pressed the question further, asking whether hearers could state the day, month, and year of their spiritual birth with the same certainty they would give for their physical birthday. Mike then shared his own dates: his physical birthday is August 10, 1947, and the day of his spiritual birth, when he became a Christian, was July 17, 1961. He observed that just as physical birth is followed by the necessity of growth, so spiritual birth must also be followed by growth, beginning in infancy in the Lord.

(6:31-10:14) Exposition of John 1:12-13 and the Right to Become Children of God

Mike expressed gratitude for the two scripture readers, John Kessler and Kevin Moosley, who had selected and read the morning's passages. He then turned to John 1:12-13, first supplying context from the opening of the Gospel. John begins by declaring that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The text next describes John the Baptist as a witness sent to bear witness of the light; John himself was not the light. The true light came into the world, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own did not receive him. Beginning at verse 12, however, the narrative shifts: "But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in his name." Mike underscored the critical importance of the word "believe," noting that Jesus himself stated in John 8:24 that unless a person believes that "I am he," that person will die in his sins. The right, or authority, to become children of God is therefore given to those who believe in his name. Some may object that people are already children of God, yet Mike explained that the Jews were children of God through physical descent, having been born into the tribes of Israel. Under the new covenant, however, God grants the right to become children of God to those who believe—those who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. It is a matter of personal choice: once a person believes in Christ, that person becomes a child of God.

(10:19-14:32) Jesus and Nicodemus: Born of Water and the Spirit

Mike directed attention to John 3, the passage that had just been read. The account opens with Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees and a ruler of the Jews, coming to Jesus by night. Nicodemus addressed Jesus as "Rabbi" and acknowledged, "We know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these things that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him directly: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus failed to understand and asked how a man can be born when he is old, and whether he can enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born. Mike remarked that Nicodemus should have known better than to pose such a question. Jesus replied again with the solemn affirmation, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Mike cautioned that some attempt to twist this verse so that it refers only to physical birth, but that is not the meaning. "Water is water," he insisted; the statement means precisely what it says. Together with the Spirit, this birth is required for entrance into the kingdom of God. The following verse removes any remaining ambiguity: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Jesus is drawing a clear distinction. Every person is first born of the flesh, yet that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. In verse 5, therefore, Jesus is speaking of the spiritual birth. Those who recognize that the water mentioned here refers to the waters of baptism also recognize the accompanying work of the Spirit. This is a spiritual birth, and the immersion that constitutes baptism is the act that makes a person born again.

(14:38-18:28) Full Context of Jesus' Conversation with Nicodemus & the Misuse of John 3:16

Mike continued by pointing out that Jesus enters the conversation with Nicodemus in verse 3 of John 3 and continues speaking with him all the way through verse 21. He emphasized this span of the dialogue because verse 16, the well-known statement "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life," is frequently quoted by those who deny that baptism is necessary to be born again or to be saved.

Such people highlight the word “believe” and note that the verse says nothing about baptism. Mike insisted that one must begin with verses 3 and 5, especially verse 5, which includes baptism. He recounted an argument in which one brother, confronted with the claim that John 3:16 says nothing about baptism, replied that the same verse also says nothing about repentance. The objector then conceded that repentance is still required, thereby answering his own objection. Mike observed that the wording is “should not perish,” not that belief alone guarantees one will not perish. This indicates that the one who believes must do something more than merely acknowledge God’s love in sending His Son. Throughout this entire exchange, Jesus is still addressing Nicodemus until the conversation concludes in verse 21.

(18:28-21:16) Sons of God through Faith and Putting on Christ in Baptism

Mike then turned to Galatians 3:26 and 27. The passage begins, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” He affirmed that faith is indeed required and that believers are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Yet the next verse must be read: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Mike illustrated the point with a simple analogy: when a person puts on clothing, that person enters into the clothing. If he were without his suit jacket, he would have to put himself into the jacket in order to have it on. In the same way, the Galatians put on Christ when they were baptized. They became children of God through faith in Christ, and they put on Christ in the act of baptism.

(21:16-27:04) Baptism into Christ’s Death & the Relationship of Baptism to the Blood of Christ

Mike next directed attention to Romans 6:3-4: “Or did you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” After one is baptized, the believer is to walk and continue in this new life, remaining faithful to God. For those who argue that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, Mike urged them to read this passage carefully. Baptism into Christ Jesus is baptism into His death. At His death Christ shed His blood, and it is that blood which remits sins and washes them away. Mike recalled a letter once written to the church in Welch, West Virginia, where he had lived. Much of the letter was a rant against the church’s observance of the Lord’s Supper, claiming that the churches of Christ were merely toasting Christ’s death. Within that letter the writer also asserted that baptism does not save—only the blood of Christ does. In his reply, after first distinguishing between making a charge and proving a charge, Mike agreed that the blood does save, wash, and cleanse. Yet he pointed out that Scripture also says baptism saves, baptism cleanses, and baptism remits sins. How can baptism accomplish the same things attributed to the blood? Because baptism places the believer where the shed blood of Christ can wash sins away. It is not the water that washes sins away; it is the blood of Christ. Passages such as Acts 2:38, Mark 16:15-16, and 1 Peter 3:21 affirm that baptism saves. Baptism and the blood say the same things because baptism puts the believer into the death where the blood was shed.

(27:04-33:21) Born Again through the Word of God and the Invitation

Mike concluded the lesson by reading 1 Peter 1:22-25. The text states, “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.” Peter is addressing Christians who have already obeyed. He continues, “having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the word of God which

lives and abides forever.” Peter then quotes Isaiah 40:6-8: “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” This is the word which by the gospel was preached to the readers. As Christians who have been born again, believers purify their souls by obeying the truth because they were born again through the word of God. The word is the seed; through the word of God one learns how to become a child of God. The word lives and abides forever, and what it produces is forever. When the gospel is preached, that is the word of God; when the word of God is preached, that is the gospel—the good news. It should be welcomed as good news that sins are cleansed when one obeys the truth and is purified by that obedience. Mike asked whether the hearers had been born again. While he himself could state the exact day and year of his spiritual birth and associate it with the birth date of a niece who had passed away, the essential question is whether one has been born again at all. He then extended the invitation: Have you been born again? Have you been faithful? Will you become one of those who have been born again? Hearers have been told what must be done—believe and be baptized in order to be saved; believe, repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. If one has not yet done so, or if one has not been as faithful as one should, the opportunity is present to come forward and let the church pray for restoration. There are two births: the fleshly birth and the spiritual birth. Why not come now if there is need, or if there is anything else one wishes to make known to the church?