

REFORMED SOTERIOLOGY: HOW IS ONE REBORN?

How is one “born again” according to Reformed theologians? What is the rebirth-order for those “dead in trespasses and sin” according to Reformed soteriology?

1. God in eternity past elected some to be saved, the rest to be lost.
2. Throughout time He regenerates those He elected.
3. He gives the elect personal faith (as a gift).
4. Finally, they believed the Gospel.

Note how clearly this is stated by Reformed Theologians:

Therefore all men...without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit...are neither able nor willing to return to God...
- Synod of Dort

The Reformed view of predestination teaches that before a person can choose Christ...he must be born again...one does not first believe, then become reborn...
- R.C. Sproul, Chosen by God, p.10.

A cardinal point of Reformed Theology is the maxim, ‘Regeneration precedes faith.’
- R.C. Sproul, Chosen by God, p.72

A man is not regenerated because he first believed in Christ, but he believes in Christ because he has been regenerated.
- A.W. Pink

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF SALVATION ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES?

According to the words of Jesus:

- John 5:25-27 Spiritual Regeneration in the _____
- John 5:28-29 Physical Resurrections in the _____ as per 1 Corinthians 15; Revelation 20

1. Vs. 25-27 clearly teach a reality in the present (this _____ has been going on for 2000 years). See John 4:23 for a similar use.
2. The “dead” in v.25 refers to alive human beings who are dead spiritually, i.e., dead in trespasses and sin (as per Ephesians 2:1).
3. These “hear” the voice of Christ’s Word (the Gospel) and live, i.e., are regenerated. NOTE: THEY MUST FIRST “HEAR”! Reaffirmed in Romans 10:14-17.

4. Doctrine: By grace God provides whatever is necessary for unsaved humans to clearly “hear” the Gospel despite the fact that they are dead in trespasses and sin.
 5. Man’s sin issue must first be resolved before the life issue kicks in.
 6. Physical resurrection in the future also has an appointed time, John 5:28-29.
 7. Both Paul and John clarify various resurrections at various times.
 - Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53
 - John in Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15.
 8. Note the repeated affirmations of the order of salvation in these _____.
- ❖ John 20:31 *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* Does this verse not clearly teach that faith precedes life!!! Reformed soteriology says “No.”
 - ❖ Galatians 3:26 *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.* How did we become sons of God... by election or by faith/belief?
 - ❖ Ephesians 1:13 *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...* Note the word order: 1) you heard the word of truth, the gospel/salvation message; 2) you believed it; 3) you were sealed with the H.S.
 - ❖ John 1:12-13 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* A believer becomes a child of God by trusting in the significance of the name of Christ, at which moment he/she is born of God (not before).

Personal faith in Christ’s death for our sins is NOT A GIFT. Faith/confidence for functional (ministering) roles in the body of Christ IS A GIFT, Romans 12:6.